

# THE LONDON READER

of Literature, Science, Art, and General Information.

THE RIGHT OF TRANSLATION IS RESERVED.]

[REGISTERED FOR TRANSMISSION ABROAD.]

No. 246.—VOL. X.]

FOR THE WEEK ENDING JANUARY 25, 1868.

[PRICE ONE PENNY.]



[HELICE IS DISINHERITED.]

## THE GOLDEN HOPE.

By MRS. H. LEWIS.

### CHAPTER XXI.

In taking leave,  
Thro' the dark lashes of her darting eyes,  
Methought she shot her soul at every glance,  
Still looking back, as if she had a mind  
That you should know she left her soul behind her.

—*Let's Theodosius.*

THE unconscious prisoner of the butler, contrary to his expectations, made no attempt at escape during the night hours succeeding the attack upon Lady Redwoode's life. There came to him from within the tower-chamber no sound like the raising of windows, and the door which he guarded so securely was not even once approached by Hellice. But he could hear the rapid, impetuous march of little feet across the chamber floor, as if she sought to wear off by exercise the excitement which filled her veins with a bursting sensation. He heard her trunk dragged from his closet, and from the sounds that followed he knew that she was placing into it all her possessions. Satisfied that she contemplated a departure from Redwoode, but in the day time, and in a legitimate manner, he muttered: "She thinks Lady Redwoode will let her go because she is a relative. Perhaps she will, more's the pity. The girl ought to be made an example of to secret poisoners. Why, she is worse than one of them 'Talias I've heard of."

With this conclusion and reflection, he stretched himself out at full length, in an easier position than he had yet assumed, and gave himself up to thought, which finally yielded to light and uneasy slumbers.

But there were two at Redwoode who passed that night in sleepless anguish—Lady Redwoode and Hellice. Hellice shared the couch of the former, and slept as peacefully as a wearied child. Lady Redwoode soon turned from the pretty, tranquil picture presented by her chosen daughter, and sought soli-

tude in her little parlour, where she might indulge without restraint in the conflicting and inexplicable emotions sweeping over her soul. And Hellice, in her distant chamber, finished packing her trunk, wearied herself with walking to and fro, and at last buried herself among the cushions of her couch, and would have seemed asleep, but for her white, up-turned face and her wide-open, suffering eyes.

The night passed wearily and slowly, and with morning came to Hellice the determination to seek her cousin, and demand from her as the price of her silence and forbearance a solemn promise that she would never again seek to harm the loving and confiding baroness. Desiring that the interview should be unwitnessed, she arose soon after daybreak and unlocked her door. As she opened it her eyes rested upon the log-like figure of the butler, and at the same moment he sprang up from his sleep, with a confused idea that she was about to attempt an escape.

One glance at her evening-dress dispelled the idea, and he moved aside, allowing her to pass him. As he did so Hellice comprehended that he was acting as her guard, and the rich, vivid scarlet tide chased the paleness from her cheeks, her eyes shot forth an indignant fire, and she drew herself up with a haughty grace that greatly impressed the wondering butler, making him feel, as he afterwards expressed it, "perfectly insignificant." She walked past him and took her way to her cousin's apartments; he followed her at a little distance, with a sort of dogged fidelity to the interests of his mistress, not suffering her to elude his sight until she had passed within Cecile's boudoir.

"She has gone to beg her cousin to intercede for her," he then thought. "I suppose she won't try to harm Miss Avon, but I'll wait outside for her," and he took possession of a hall chair, which commanded a view of Cecile's door.

Cecile was, of course, not in her chamber, but the Hindoo ayah was there, heavy-eyed and stolid-faced, with strangely written leaves of vellum around her, and with a quaint old brass-bound, brass-clasped volume on her knees. She had been prac-

tising her fancied arts of astrology, seeking to read the stars and learn the future of her yellow-haired mistress; but as Hellice made her appearance she concealed the precious book and unbound leaves behind her and looked up with a startled, inquiring glance.

"I wish to see Cecile," said Hellice, abruptly. "She slept with Lady Redwoode," was the reply. "Impossible!" exclaimed Hellice, her pale face growing momentarily full of a wild pain. "She did not dare to share the bed of the lady she would have murdered! She did not dare pillow her head upon the heart she would have stilled for ever! She did not dare—"

She paused, as the door again opened, and Cecile came in, wrapped in a long white dressing-gown, her feet encased in blue velvet slippers, and her yellow hair tangled and dishevelled. She did not observe Hellice, and exclaimed, peevishly:

"I have not slept well, Renee. Lady Redwoode has shut herself up in her parlour, and I haven't seen her since I went to bed. I must have a cup of strong coffee immediately, and I will try then to sleep."

Her wandering gaze at this juncture fell upon her cousin: she uttered a faint scream, and retreated several steps.

"You here!" she cried. "Yes, I am here, Cecile," answered Hellice, striving to speak calmly. "I have come to propose an agreement to you. You know that I was here, in this room, last night, that I heard your entire conversation with Renee, and that it is in my power to alienate from you the affections of Lady Redwoode?"

"She would not believe you!" protested Cecile, pallid with fear and anger. "I know she would not!"

"Do not be too sure of that," said Hellice, quietly. "From what I overheard I conclude that you are jealous of me, and angry because Lady Redwoode has declared me as her adopted daughter. You planned to burn her new will and inherit the whole of her property. If I were gone, Cecile, if your position

here were perfectly secure, would you ever again attempt the horrible tragedy of last night?"

"I deny that I attempted to poison her—"  
"Hush, Cecile. Denials are useless with me, who know all. If I were gone in disgrace, would there then remain to you a motive for Lady Redwoode's death?"

Hellice's tone and countenance commanded a reply, and Cecile faltered a negative.

"Then I will bear the burden of your guilt!" declared Hellice, calmly in tone, yet with intense sorrow in her dark eyes. "Cecile, it was not Lady Redwoode's money I wanted, nor her social position. I craved her love. Not even you who are her daughter can understand the yearning with which my heart turns to her, Cecile," and here the young girl's tone grew wild and impassioned. "She seems to me a beautiful angel, a tender-hearted Madonna, and I would have given half the future years of my life to have been gathered to her heart, loved and cared for. Cecile, I have never known what it was to be loved—never, never!" and the girl's voice arose to a wail. "In our childhood's home you ruled, and everyone bowed before your will. All caresses were lavished upon you, and I was neglected, lonely, and desolate in my father's house! It was you whom my father loved, it was you whom my mother idolized. It is you who have won from me the heart of my grandmother. For your sake she looks coldly upon the offspring of her own child, the only living creature in whom her blood flows. And you have grudged me at last the kindness of my aunt. Oh, Cecile, Cecile!"

She uttered the name with a tone of reproach that would have pierced a more generous soul than Cecile's to its depths. Cecile was confused, but her blue eyes glittered defiantly, and her features grew rigid with a determination to be pitiless and merciless. Still she kept silence.

Hellice struggled with her emotions, conquered them sternly, and said, with her former quietude:

"I have resolved to leave Redwoode for ever. My happiness and peace here are impossible. I am going out into the world, and Redwoode shall never know me again. But before I go, Cecile, promise me by whatever you deem sacred and holy, by my parents who nurtured and loved you, by the good that must be hidden in your heart, by your hopes of a hereafter—promise me that you will be a true and loving daughter to Lady Redwoode, and that you will never, never again seek to harm her!"

"I promise," declared Cecile, firmly.

She forced herself to meet Hellice's keen, penetrating gaze, and assumed an expression of honest truthfulness that deceived her.

"My sacrifice will not be vain then," said Hellice, with a sigh that was almost a moan.

"You will go this morning?" inquired Cecile.

Hellice bowed her head.

"Let us part friends, then," said Cecile, with ill-concealed joy, and she held out her hand. "I hope you will always let me know where you are."

"No, Cecile. When we part now we part for ever!" replied Hellice, ignoring her cousin's extended hand.

"You will at least shake hands with me."

"Never!" said Hellice, with a scarcely hidden loathing. "I will not sully my hand by pressing within it the hand of a would-be matricide. Do not attempt to deceive yourself or me, Cecile. All pretence of sisterly affection must be abandoned between us. There is little love for you in my heart, and you have shown me that your old affection for me has turned to hatred. We will not therefore simulate an affection that is impossible."

She turned away, and moved towards the door.

"At least, you will embrace your grandmother," said Cecile.

Hellice looked back, gazing upon the berry-brown face and glittering eyes of the Hindoo, but there was no love in her glance.

"If Renee be really my grandmother," she said, slowly, "there are no ties of affection between us. From this moment I disown all connection between her and me. Beware of her, Cecile. She is your evil counsellor, your guide in wickedness, and she will imperil your soul if you listen to her counsels!"

Disregarding the look of hatred darted from Renee's small black eyes, and the strange smile that crept over Cecile's lips, Hellice quitted the apartment, hastening to her own rooms. Despite her anxieties and sense of trouble, she was not unconscious that her self-constituted guard followed her closely, and when she had again locked her door she knew that he remained outside it.

There were two vacant places at the breakfast-table that morning—the places usually occupied by Lady Redwoode and Hellice. Mr. Kenneth entered the handsome breakfast-parlour first, his round face of preternatural length, his manner abstracted, instead of bustling, and his entire appearance de-

pressed and dejected. He was standing by one of the long French windows, toying with a spray of flowers that fell through the open sash, when Andrew Forsythe came in, pale and disturbed, his toilet made with less than usual elegance. The two gentlemen shook hands, inquired of each other if Lady Redwoode were well, and silence then ensued. It was broken by the entrance of Cecile, carefully attired as usual, her white morning-dress bound at the waist with flowing blue ribbons, and similar ones knotted in her golden hair. That she had slept well was evidenced by the smoothness and freshness of her face and the repose of her manner.

Mr. Forsythe met her near the door and escorted her to Lady Redwoode's seat at the head of the table, and Cecile strove to fulfil her duties gracefully and with grace. She gave anew her version of the night's drama as she poured the coffee from the massive silver urn, was loud in her denunciations of Hellice, and pathetic in her pity for the baroness. The keen old lawyer detected a vein of insincerity in her speech, and Mr. Forsythe, with a suspicion of the truth, said little, except now and then to utter an exclamation or ask a question.

The breakfast over, the gentlemen adjourned to the library to discuss there what should be done with Hellice. They had hardly taken their seats when Cecile followed them, coming into the grand old vaulted room like a spirit of light. Before Mr. Kenneth had time to request her departure she exclaimed:

"You must not send me away, Mr. Kenneth. I know you are going to decide what you must do with my cousin, and I have a right to say something in the matter. It was I who detected her, you know."

She seated herself coolly, and regarded Mr. Kenneth with a very decided expression of countenance. "But, my dear young lady," remonstrated the lawyer, "your sensitive heart will be grieved by our discussion. It is better for you to retire to your room."

Cecile's lips quivered and she shrugged her shoulders wilfully.

"Say what you like," she said, obstinately. "I will stay!"

Mr. Kenneth looked at Mr. Forsythe in helpless bewilderment. He did not understand the wilful ways of womankind, and his look solicited aid in expelling Cecile, whom he regarded as a tender-hearted, loving child, who would resent any condemnation of her former sister. Mr. Forsythe declined to aid him, quietly shaking his head. There succeeded an embarrassing pause, which was broken by the entrance of Lady Redwoode.

She came in quietly, attired in the deepest mourning, her golden hair banded smoothly away from her face, her features pale and composed, and bearing traces of recent and long-continued agitation. Mr. Kenneth and Mr. Forsythe sprang up to meet her and escorted her to an easy, cushioned chair.

"This will be too much for you, dear Lady Redwoode," said the old lawyer, reproachfully. "You ought not to be here."

"This is my place," said her ladyship, wearily. "I wish to consult with you about Hellice. There must be no exposure of this sad affair. I will not have it discussed in the neighbourhood!"

"Your ladyship does not intend to keep this midnight-poisoner here?" exclaimed Mr. Kenneth, aghast.

"No, my friend, it is better that she should go. Her attempted crime is known to the servants, and she could never be respected here. She would be unhappy at Redwoode—besides, I cannot bear her presence. I had begun to love her more—more than my own child! I have been rightly punished." She leaned her pale face against the crimson cushions of her chair, and her blue eyes brimmed over with sad tears.

"Give me the will I made the other day, Mr. Kenneth," she said, in a low tone.

The old lawyer drew a note-book from his pocket, and subtracted from it the important document to which the baroness had referred. He had intended to put it in a more secure place, but had delayed doing so. He handed her the paper in silence, and she looked it over with misty eyes.

"Andrew," she said, "send for Hellice!"

Mr. Forsythe obeyed by going for the maiden himself. He was gone some minutes, but returned with her at last. The young girl had changed her evening-dress for a black silk travelling-robe, and its only relief was the white linen that gleamed at her throat and wrists, and her slender watch-chain. There was no fear in her manner, no apprehension in her looks. Brave, and outwardly calm, gentle and sorrowful, she was a being to touch even the stoniest heart. Lady Redwoode covered her eyes, and Mr. Kenneth dashed a tear from his, but Cecile's gaze was unwaveringly bright.

"You sent for me, Lady Redwoode?" said Hellice,

approaching the baroness, and addressing her in clear, sweet, ringing tones.

"I did," said the baroness, removing her hand from her eyes. "Andrew, light me a taper, please!" Mr. Forsythe wonderfully obeyed, finding tapers and matches at a writing-table near. He brought the little scented column of wax in its silver sconce, and held it close to her ladyship, his face full of inquiry and anxiety.

"Take notice, Hellice," said Lady Redwoode, exhibiting the will she had just reclaimed from Mr. Kenneth. "This is the will by which I made you co-heiress with my daughter. It is thus I observe its provisions."

She held it over the gleaming taper, holding it between her slender fingers until the bright flame had crept near her flesh, then she dropped it into the sconce, and watched it flame, burn and smoulder, until at last only a thin, withered, brown ash remained, which trembled in the air and which a breath would have blown into fragments.

Cecile watched the incineration with glittering eyes.

Hellice watched it too, her dark face glowing with an awful indignation, a look of brooding storm in her dusky eyes, and her proud mouth quivering with outraged feeling.

Lady Redwoode and Mr. Kenneth, seeing her thus, misunderstood her emotion, and hardened their hearts towards her.

"So ends your dream of wealth, Hellice," said her ladyship, coldly, when Mr. Forsythe had given the ashes to the outer air and restored the sconce to its place. "With it ends your residence here. You must go away from Redwoode to-day—this morning! Your presence here tortures me. Sir Richard Haughton must not see you again—must never know your whereabouts!"

A swift spasm of pain convulsed Hellice's face, and she turned a frightened gaze upon her cousin.

"Must he be told?" she murmured.

"Of course. Do you think I would permit my friend to marry one so unworthy of him?" inquired the baroness.

Hellice put out her hands blindly and caught hold of the table, clenching it as it she feared falling.

"I will go now," she said, faintly and feebly. "Let me go now!"

"You can go as soon as your future is decided upon," returned Lady Redwoode. "I shall allow you a decent mourning."

"I will not accept a penny of it," interrupted Hellice, vehemently, her emotion finding vent. "I have something of my own. Papa left Cecile and me each a hundred or two a year. I have enough to support me!"

"Very well, then. I will not press anything upon your acceptance. I am aware that any appropriate sum would seem small and inadequate after your recent expectations. Will your grandmother accompany you?"

"Not so far as your gate-lodge!" declared Hellice, her eyes burning with smouldering fire. "She and I are her worth strangers. I prefer to meet my future alone!"

"But I cannot permit you to go out into the world alone, as you seem inclined to do," said Lady Redwoode. "The world is not a fitting place for a beautiful and unprotected young girl. False and wicked as you are, Hellice, ungrateful and unscrupulous as you have proved yourself, I should be devoid of humanity if I could cast you adrift. I wish I knew of someone to whose care I could entrust you—someone who would be a strict, yet kind, guardian to your wayward youth!"

"I know such a person, Lady Redwoode," said Mr. Kenneth, thoughtfully. "I have a sister—a maiden lady, older than myself. She lives alone at an old country-seat that has belonged to our family for many years. She has many peculiarities, but she is good-hearted and devoted to me. Her home would be a safe, if not altogether pleasant, refuge for your misguided niece. My sister would be glad of company, and her influence over Miss Glinwick would be very beneficial."

"You think she would receive my niece?" Gladly. She has great veneration for the name of Lady Redwoode, and Miss Glinwick would receive only kindness at her hands. If you so decide, I will take Miss Hellice there by the first train. She cannot leave Redwoode too soon."

"True, Mr. Kenneth. Your offer is providential. As the guardian of my niece I accept this home for her, and trust she will not abuse the hospitality extended to her. Make any terms you please with Miss Kenneth for me, for Hellice must not go to her as a dependant. Hellice," continued the baroness, addressing the girl, "you hear what has been said. Will you accompany Mr. Kenneth quietly to his sister's home?"

Hellice would have objected to the arrangement



had she been able to do so. It was torture to her proud and guiltless soul to think of going to a home where tidings of her supposed crime must accompany her—a home where she would be treated as a secret poisoner and unscrupulous person; but no other refuge offered. She was but a young girl, ignorant of English life, save a slight knowledge gained from books; gifted with a wondrous beauty that would inevitably embarrass her, if poor and unprotected; and, besides, Lady Redwoode was her legal guardian, and it would not be possible to disobey her. Like a reed, therefore, bent before the blast, so Hellice bent before the force of circumstances.

"I will go to Miss Kenneth's—the sooner the better!" she said, quietly.

"You will scarcely have time to pack your trunks, Miss Hellice, if we go by the first train," said Mr. Kenneth, arising and looking at his watch.

"My trunk is packed, and I have only to put on my bonnet and cloak," answered Hellice.

"I will order the carriage, then," said the old lawyer, touching a bell-rope. "We have but little more than time enough to get to Wharton before the train goes. We take our train from Wharton, Miss Hellice."

The carriage was ordered, and Mr. Kenneth withdrew to prepare himself for his suddenly projected journey. Hellice stood a moment in silence, fixing upon Lady Redwoode a glance that haunted her sleeping and waking hours long afterwards—it was so sad, so reproachful, so intensely mournful! Then, without a word, the girl turned and quitted the room, yielding to no one even a parting look.

By the time the carriage had been brought around and Hellice's trunk placed on the box beside the coachman, Hellice herself made her appearance. She had added a long black silk circular cloak to her costume, a white lace scarf was put around her slender throat, and a thick black lace veil fell from the narrow brim of her hat and was fastened under her chin, entirely concealing her features. She carried in one hand a small Russian leather dressing-bag, and a shawl hung on her arm.

She came into the hall alone and seemed disturbed that there was no one to speak a kindly word to her at parting. A parlour-maid peeped from the drawing-room, another maid looked over the carved railing of the banisters, and the butler stood in the open doorway to witness her departure. A feeling of utter forlornness came over the poor young creature, and she repressed a sob that it might not be heard. While she thus stood Mr. Kenneth came briskly from the library, offered her his arm, and on its being declined preceded her to the carriage.

Hellice followed slowly, but before she had reached the door Andrew Forsythe came out from the library and approached her, holding out his hand. She took it and clung to it.

"You come from her?" she whispered. "Did she—Lady Redwoode—send me any message?"

"None whatever!"

"She thinks me wicked, false, and vile!" She thinks I would have killed her!" moaned Hellice.

"She thinks so, but you have a friend and advocate in me, Hellice," said Mr. Forsythe, warmly. "I know you are innocent, and I will prove you so—"

"It would break her heart if she thought ill of Cecile! Say nothing, Mr. Forsythe, unless it be to clear me in Sir Richard Haughton's eyes. Don't let him think so ill of me!" pleaded Hellice. "I shall never forget that you refused to believe in my guilt. And now, good-bye!"

She drew her hand from his, ran down the steps, entered the carriage, taking a seat opposite Mr. Kenneth's, and they drove away.

From an upper chamber, to which she had retreated, Lady Redwoode, on her knees, and sobbing like one in mortal anguish, looked after the departing vehicle, and felt that the best part of her life had gone from her.

The drive to Wharton was speedily accomplished. Hellice kept in her corner and maintained silence all the way. Once only she looked, and then it was to glance at Sea View. That glance comprehended a view of Sir Richard Haughton and his uncle on horseback, on the point of setting out for Redwoode. From that moment she drooped like a wounded bird, and when they arrived at the Wharton station Mr. Kenneth was obliged to lift her from the carriage as if she had been a helpless child. Her veil was thrown back to give her air, and Mr. Kenneth's heart softened as he saw how white and full of pain was her lovely face.

He took her into the waiting-room and left her while he proceeded to take two places to the station nearest his sister's home. He had scarcely disappeared when Margaret Sorel, plainly attired, and without disguise, entered the room. She had come to the station, expecting to meet her brother. She recognized Hellice at once, and knew from her appearance that something unusual had occurred

—something that might affect the fortunes of Sir Richard Haughton and his betrothed. This idea was confirmed when Mr. Kenneth returned with his tickets. She saw by his manner that something was wrong, and she grew solicitous to comprehend it. She was an energetic woman, and after a few minutes' reflection she proceeded to the booking-office and procured a ticket to the end of the route, determined to track Hellice's movements.

She had scarcely accomplished her object and returned to the waiting-room, when the train came in and Mr. Kenneth escorted his charge to one of the carriages. Margaret Sorel took possession of the next compartment, and the train started, bearing away the stricken Hellice and her guardian, and to the same destination Hellice's unknown and remorseless enemy.

## CHAPTER XXII.

He loird on her with dangerous eye-glance,  
Showing his nature in his countenance.  
*Spenser's Faery Queen.*

They did not know how hate can burn  
In hearts once changed from soft to stern;  
Nor all the false or fatal zeal  
The convert of revenge can feel.  
*Dryden.*

SIR RICHARD HAUGHTON looked idly at the Redwoode carriage almost at the same moment when Hellice was regarding him with intense gaze, but no tender instinct warned him of the trouble that had overwhelmed his betrothed, no magnetic sympathy impelled him to dash after the receding vehicle and look upon the face of her who had brought joy and gladness to his life. Instead, after one wild glance, he turned to his uncle, who had just mounted, and said, gaily:

"To-day, Uncle William, I am to see Hellice again! It seems to me that the sun shines more brightly than usual, and the air is a thousand-fold sweeter. She will see you, too—"

"And we will find out why she sent back your letters all carefully re-enclosed and re-directed," answered Mr. Haughton as they rode slowly down the avenue.

A shadow obscured the brightness of the baronet's face, and he said, thoughtfully:

"Hellice must have seen the pretended gipsy on the evening of our betrothal. I left my darling in the conservatory where she had been while I went to share my joy with Lady Redwoode, and when I returned she had vanished. I have not seen her since. I am sure she must have encountered Margaret Sorel, who laid the blame of our divorce upon me, and perhaps told Hellice that I gave her my first, best love. It is false. That boyish fancy was not love. I must see Hellice to-day and set her doubts at rest. I shall demand an interview and accept no refusal. Oh, if I had only told her the story of my marriage when she asked me if I had ever loved before!"

Vain regret! A pang smote his heart suddenly, as if a faint consciousness of the consequences of his error had dawned upon him; he put spurs to his steed, and the two riders swept out of the Sea View grounds and dashed over the road towards Redwoode.

The ride was soon accomplished, and the riders dismounted at the great hospitable porch of the baroness's dwelling, flung their reins to a groom, and were shown into a pleasant morning room. The sun flooded the room with pleasant light, the deep windows were half filled with flowers, and in the midst of the floral display hung glittering cages in which gay-plumaged birds fluttered noisily and sang with riotous melody. Despite the summer warmth and brightness of the scene, a shadow fell upon the spirit of Sir Richard, and, unable to compose himself, he paced backwards and forwards uneasily, the gravity of his face deepening, and a sudden fear taking birth in his heart.

"Perhaps Hellice's illness is worse!" said Mr. Haughton, infected by his nephew's manner. "The house seems like a funeral. Those flowers and birds there seem a mockery."

The baronet was disturbed by this remark more than he would have liked to appear. He stepped forward to touch a bell-rope that he might question one of the servants of the establishment, but his purpose was arrested by the entrance of Lady Redwoode. Her white, sad face, her sorrowing eyes, her patient sweetness of expression, as well as her heavy, sable robes, struck the ardent young lover like a heavy blow.

"Good heaven!" he cried, catching at a chair for support. "Hellice is not—not dead?"

"Not dead, Sir Richard," said Lady Redwoode, coming up to him and putting her hand upon his arm, "not physically dead—yet dead to you and me!"

The young baronet looked at her wildly and incredulously, as if he thought her senses wandering. Then he uttered a strange, hysterical sort of laugh, at the sound of which Lady Redwoode shuddered.

"Take me to her," he demanded. "Let me see her at once!"

"Hear what I have to say, Sir Richard," said the baroness. "Sit down and listen to me."

She led him to a chair, gently forced him to be seated, drew a chair beside him, and, said, hesitatingly:

"I know not how to commence my story; Hellice has proved herself unworthy of your regard or mine—"

"It is false!" interrupted Sir Richard, involuntarily. "Hellice is an angel. Oh, Lady Redwoode, what does all this mean? Tell me that you are joking—merely trying my love for your niece. It is a ghastly joke, but say that it is one."

"Sir Richard, be calm. It is no joke. Do you not see that I have suffered? that since yesterday I have known a terrible sorrow and bitterness? You, who have already suffered deeply at the hands of one woman, can you not bear a blow from another? Summon up your strength and courage, and listen to me before my courage fails me."

Looking into her lovely face, momentarily convulsed by a spasm of anguish, the baronet schooled himself to listen to her with apparent calmness. He knew now that the revelation of some terrible sorrow awaited him, and already he felt the numbness of despair creeping over him.

"What is it?" he asked, hollowly. "Is she angry with me? Has she, in her anger, gone away with Mr. Forsythe and married him? Say the worst at once!"

"It is not that. Hellice is free," said the baroness, unheeding the sigh of relief with which her remark was welcomed. "I do not know how to prepare you, Sir Richard, for the truth. You know that Hellice is of Hindoo blood. Her grandmother, Renee, is a half-caste woman, who was very handsome in her youth, and who attracted the attention of an officer of the East India Company. Her daughter, the daughter also of this officer, became my brother's wife. Renee is artful, unscrupulous, and full of dissimulation. So was her daughter. Hellice resembles both."

Sir Richard uttered a passionate protest, which passed unheeded.

Lady Redwoode nerved herself to the task before her. Taking the young man's hand, she reminded him of the will she had recently made; told him that on the previous evening her parting with her niece had seemed colder than usual, although her heart had been unusually tender towards her; told of the supposed conversation between the cousins; and then, with slow and faltering speech, related how she had been awakened from her first sleep by the struggle of the two young girls beside her bed, how Cecile had detected Hellice in the act of attempting to poison her with some subtle Indian drug, and had saved her life. She added that Hellice had not attempted to deny the accusation; that she had declared the contents of the phial to be deadly poison; and that she had not even offered one word in her own defence.

The young lover listened in silence, his fine face growing pale and stern, his blue eyes emitting an intense light, expressive of the most powerful repressed feeling. When she had concluded he said, decidedly:

"There is some mistake, Lady Redwoode. I will stake my life on Hellice's innocence. My poor little dove! Take me to her at once. She needs tenderness, love, and sympathy in her desolation. Take me to her!"

And he arose and moved towards the door with generous impatience.

"Sir Richard, think how short a time you have known her," said the baroness, following him. "Do not let her beauty blind you to her faults—"

"I know her thoroughly," interrupted Sir Richard. "It does not require years to read a nature so pure and sweet as that of Hellice. I would trust her and cling to her though all the world forsook her! Come, lead me to her."

"I cannot, Sir Richard. She is gone."

"Gone!"

"Yes, I sent her away from Redwoode this morning."

"Sent her away?" echoed the baronet, with dilating eyes. "Sent away that weak, invalid girl? Sent her away in her sorrow and misery, in her heavy grief and physical weakness? What most she not have suffered! My poor, wounded little girl! Where is she? Where is she?"

"That I cannot tell you, Sir Richard," said her ladyship, firmly, resolved to save the young enthusiast from sacrificing himself at the shrine of an unworthy marriage. "Hellice can never be your wife. She would be as unsuitable a bride for you as the actress whom you first wedded. You shall not, with my consent, degrade yourself by marrying Hellice. In the future you will thank me for my present firmness!"

In vain Sir Richard pleaded. Lady Redwoode was inflexible to his prayers and his tears, for the thought of Hellice's desolation and misery brought tears to his stern eyes, unused as they were to weeping.

"It is useless to implore me, Sir Richard," said her ladyship. "Question Cecile, if you will, concerning her cousin. She will so enlighten you that you will be grateful for your escape."

"It is Cecile, then, who has wrought all this misery!" cried Sir Richard. "I thought I saw her hand in it. Lady Redwoode, you have taken the viper to your heart and flung from you the priceless jewel. Remember my words. Let the relationship of these two young girls to you be what it may, it is Hellice who is the true and noble one. Your choice between them was a leap in the dark! You may have chosen rightly. But you may also have chosen wrongly. Heaven grant that Hellice may be restored to me, and, poor, weak, and friendless as she is, I shall hold her more richly dowered than the heiress of all your wealth!"

Lady Redwoode could not reply, but the words repeated themselves again in her mind—"your choice was a leap in the dark!" and she felt their truth and force with a painful sinking at her heart.

"A leap in the dark!" Yes, that was all. Her instinct had failed her at the critical moment. Chance and similarity of features had guided her choice. Perhaps, after all, the supposed guilty Hellice was her own child and Cecile was the daughter of her brother.

She put these thoughts aside uneasily, as Mr. Haughton said, sagely:

"Cheer up, Dick. It's easy enough to find Hellice. She went by the train, and you and I will look for her. If we fail, we'll come home and finish my flying machine—"

"You are right, uncle," interposed Sir Richard, as he remembered the carriage that had passed Sea View. "We'll be off at once!"

He stopped only long enough to convince Lady Redwoode that he did not blame her for her seeming harshness, that it was no boyish whim that impelled him to at once claim Hellice for his bride, and then he quitted the room, gained the porch, mounted, and rode away with his uncle.

Neither relaxed his speed until they had reached Wharton. They hastened to the station, learned that there would be no train before evening going in either direction, and ascertained also that a young lady answering to the description of Hellice had taken the early train northward, attended by Mr. Kenneth, who was well known at the station. Sir Richard could scarcely restrain his impatience until evening. He spent the day at Wharton, secured two places in the train when the time drew near, and at last found himself whirling along through the early evening in search of his betrothed.

The uncle and nephew alighted at North Eldon—their destination—before it had grown late, and the latter hastened to make inquiries after the object of his search. He learned from the guard that several persons had alighted from the early train, but that he had remarked no lady in particular, excepting a handsome brunette lady, whose bright cheeks and dark eyes had made her peculiarly attractive.

Knowing nothing of the pursuit of Margaret Sorel, Sir Richard very naturally supposed this description to refer to Hellice, whose dark loveliness could not well avoid attracting the man's observation. Full of hope, therefore, he set out to trace the handsome brunette, and was so successful as to discover that she had taken rooms at the village inn—the Eldon Arms. He hastened thither with the speed of an ardent lover, discovered that she was not returned from a temporary absence, and, full of wonder, not unmixed with alarm at her singular movements, sat down in the parlour to await her return.

About the hour when Sir Richard and his uncle set out on their journey Cecile and Mr. Andrew Forsythe were in the drawing-room at Redwoode. Lady Redwoode bore them company, but she was wrapped in sad thoughts, and sat apart, bearing no share in the conversation. Mr. Forsythe had been endeavouring to make himself agreeable to the heiress, but her manner had become abstracted, and the conversation flagged beyond all power of reviving. The truth was, the hour appointed for Cecile's second meeting with Mr. Darcy Anchester had arrived, and she had become anxious to effect her escape from the room unseen. Her anxiety had become plainly perceptible to Mr. Forsythe. He noticed the furtive glances that she now and then directed towards the conservatory, and at last he fancied he beheld the brown face of the Hindoo ayah rise from amidst the feathery foliage for one brief instant and then as quickly disappear. He saw that his attentions had become irksome to the girl, and that she could scarcely restrain her impatience at their continuance.

He, therefore, with the cunning that was a part of his nature, took up a book, glanced over it casually, and pretended to become gradually absorbed in its contents. His ruse was successful. Cecile arose, sauntered across the floor, and flitted into the conservatory, where she appeared busy among the flowers. A moment later she had passed from sight.

Lady Redwoode was quite unconscious of the little scene, and did not even observe Mr. Forsythe as he also arose and carelessly entered the conservatory. As he expected, he found it deserted. The garden door was open, and he looked from it, beholding two cloaked figures flitting across the garden and making for the wood enclosing it.

"Cecile and her ayah," he thought, in surprise. "They are going to the Acacia Walk. What can be the meaning of their desire for secrecy? Perhaps they have some little secret in hand which it may benefit me to discover."

Acting on this thought, he waited until they had gained the shadow of the wall, and then he followed their steps, the shrubbery screening him from the eyes of any wandering servant. He gained the Acacia Walk, and crept along in its shadow, until he was very near Cecile and beyond the view of her sentinel.

Cecile paused a moment a few yards from him, and he could hear her murmur:

"He has not come! What can be the meaning of his absence?"

The words were hardly uttered when a tall, almost gigantic, figure appeared from the shadow behind the girl, coming into her view with sudden abruptness.

Cecile uttered a slight shriek.

"How you startled me," she said, peevishly. "You make quite a dramatic appearance!"

"You must have a bad conscience, Cecile," laughed Mr. Darcy Anchester, putting one arm around her and drawing her to his breast.

The girl impatiently freed herself, and exclaimed, imperiously:

"No endearments between us, Darcy. I will not submit to the miserable mockery of them. There is no longer even the pretence of love between us. I came to meet you here the other evening full of love and ardour, believing that affection for me brought you hither from India. But when you avowed to me the truth that not love but ambition had brought you here—that you desired to make me your stepping-stone to wealth and position—and that you had no right to the noble name you bear—my love was turned to hatred—hatred the most bitter and intense."

She spoke the last words hissing, and Andrew Forsythe from his friendly shadows knew that she meant them.

"Well, Cecile," responded Mr. Anchester, gaily, "it makes no difference whether the motive be fear or hate, so long as you are my slave. I've a hard and tight bit between your teeth, my little beauty, and I have no fears that your puny efforts can effect your freedom. You are in my power, Cecile—remember that!"

The girl drew her cloak closer under her chin, and her teeth chattered strangely for such a warm summer evening.

"Well," she said, in a subdued tone, "what do you want of me now?"

"I have made up my mind to hasten our marriage, Cecile," was the careless reply. "I received a letter from my father to-day, and he tells me to come to his place and he will see what he can do for me. He hints at a handsome provision, and you may be sure that I shall reject nothing that will add to my income. I may be absent a month. He has invited me for that period, and I am to pass for the son of a friend in India. At the end of a month, then, I shall return to claim you as my wife!"

"Lady Redwoode will never consent to such a marriage!" said Cecile, desperately.

"You must convince her that your happiness depends upon it," replied Mr. Anchester, coolly. "Tell her you cannot live without me. If she remains deaf to your pleadings, we must make a stolen marriage! There is no escape for you, Cecile."

The girl did not plead for a respite, for she knew pleadings would be useless. Her features became set in a hard expression, and her eyes sparkled strangely, as if were the opportunity given her she would free herself from Mr. Anchester's power at once and for ever by a blow that would deprive him of life.

"It is settled, then?" said Mr. Anchester.

Cecile bowed her head in silence.

"Now tell me how affairs go on at Redwoode!" said her promised husband, jovially. "Does her ladyship dote on her golden-haired daughter? Does Hellice play poor Cinderella? I shall have to look

after our pretty Hellice when I become master of Redwoode."

"Hellice has gone away," returned Cecile, in a cold, hard tone, that was strangely metallic.

"Gone away? Where, if I may ask?" and Mr. Anchester looked incredulous.

"I don't know where. She tried to poison mamma last night, and so she has been sent away in disgrace. She crept into mamma's room, and would have killed her if I had not followed and rescued my dear mother!"

"A fine story!" sneered Mr. Anchester. "So Hellice tried to 'poison mamma,' did she? I suppose you are the chief witness against her?"

"I am!" said Cecile, defiantly.

"I thought so," said her betrothed, quietly. "I like your spirit, Cecile. You had but to determine that your rival should be dismissed in disgrace, and lo! it is accomplished! Of course, I understand the whole matter. I suppose that Lady Redwoode regards Hellice with proper horror, and will never leave her a penny to bless herself with, as the saying goes?"

"Never!" said Cecile, energetically.

"Very good. You are exceedingly clever, Cecile, but beware about trying your cleverness against me. I am on my guard!" declared Mr. Anchester, warningly. "I don't doubt but you are fertile in resources, but you must work with me, not against me! Remember that I heard the three several communications of the dying Mr. Glintwick to you, Renee and Hellice!"

Cecile shuddered and faltered a denial of any designs against Mr. Anchester, whom she professed herself willing to marry at the time appointed.

"I believe you," said Mr. Anchester, with a sardonic smile. "I shall come to Redwoode one month from to-day. I shall not meet you secretly, but inquire for you at the mansion. You will introduce me to Lady Redwoode as your friend. If she refuses to smile upon my suit, we must run away together and be married somewhere else. Remember, I hold your fate in my hands!"

With these words he glided away as suddenly as he had appeared, leaving the girl stupefied and overwhelmed at his declarations. She wrung her hands in dismay at the fate before her, and trembled in anticipation of absolute ruin.

"If he were only dead!" she cried aloud. "I am on the brink of an awful gulf! Who can save me? Oh, for a friend to help me!"

Again she wrung her hands, and her voice arose in a wail that rang through the wood, startling the birds, and frightening Renee into a paroxysm of fear.

The cry had scarcely died away when she felt a heavy hand on her shoulder. With a shriek, she sprang aside, and found herself face to face with Andrew Forsythe, whose countenance shone with an evil and triumphant meaning. She comprehended in one brief instant that he had overheard her interview with Mr. Anchester, that the toils she had so skillfully woven were discovered, that instead of one enemy she had two, and with one wild moan the guilty creature sank into a swoon at his feet.

(To be continued.)

**OLD LAMBETH CHURCH CLOCK.**—The clock of Old Lambeth Church, after 200 years' service, is about to be replaced by a modern successor; and the window commemorating the existence of "the pedlar and his dog" to be enriched by the addition of coloured glass. The cost is to be defrayed from a grant of 250*l.* out of the proceeds of the Pedlar's Acre estate.

**THE SILKWORM.**—Mr. Prevost, a famous silkworm breeder in California, says:—"Just a month ago I was in Sacramento, and think how pleased I was to find that over 3,000,000 of mulberry trees were growing there finely in different places. And I found, also, that Mrs. Haynie had a fine crop of cocoons—the finest I have ever seen. The question is now settled that the mulberry tree and the worms succeed finely all over the State; but by what I see Sacramento will be the first silk district of California. I think that for the next season they will have there food enough for 10,000,000 of silkworms."

**THE AGES OF NATIONS.**—Lord Bacon says in his essay on Vicissitudes of Things: "In the youth of a State arms do flourish; in the middle of a State learning; and then both of them together for a time; in the declining age of a State mechanical arts and merchandize." Certainly mechanical arts and merchandize have somewhat pushed aside arms with England; but we refuse to believe that the old spirit is dead. It sleeps, perhaps, only too soundly, and the shaking given us by European wars close beside us, and an Abyssinian expedition to defend our honour, may have the good effect of rousing us to a sense of the danger incurred by the unready, whether Saxons, Romans, or Austrians.





[THE ABBOT'S GHOST.]

## WHO WAS IT?

## CHAPTER VII.

"BLESS me, how dull we all are to-night," exclaimed Rose, as the younger portion of the party wandered listlessly about the drawing-rooms that evening, while Lady Treherne and the major played an absorbing game of piquet, and the general dozed peacefully at last.

"It is because Maurice is not here. He always keeps us alive, for he is a fellow of infinite resources," replied Sir Jasper, suppressing a yawn.

"Have him out then," said Mr. Annon.

"He won't come; the poor lad is dull to-night in spite of his improvement. Something is amiss, and there is no getting a word out of him."

"Sad memories afflict him perhaps," sighed Blanche.

"Don't be absurd, dear. Sad memories are all nonsense; melancholy is always indigestion, and nothing is so sure a cure as fun," said Rose, briskly. "I'm going to send in a polite invitation, begging him to come and amuse us. He'll accept it, I haven't a doubt."

The message was sent, but to Rose's chagrin a polite refusal was returned.

"He shall come, Sir Jasper; do you and Mr. Annon go as a deputation from us, and return without him at your peril," was her command.

They went, and while waiting their reappearance the sisters spoke of what all had observed.

"How lovely Mrs. Snowdon looks to-night. I always thought she owed half her charms to her skill in dress, but she never looked so beautiful as in that plain black silk, with those roses in her hair," said Rose.

"What has she done to herself?" replied Blanche. "I see a change, but can't account for it. She and Tavia have made some beautifying discovery, for both look altogether uplifted and angelic all of a sudden."

"Here come the gentlemen, and, as I'm a Talbot, they haven't got him!" cried Rose, as the deputation appeared, looking very crestfallen. "Don't come near me," she added, irefully. "You are disloyal towards, and I doom you to exile till I want you. I am infinite in resources as well as this recreant man, and come he shall. Mrs. Snowdon, would you mind asking Mr. Treherne to suggest something to wile away the rest of the evening? We are in despair, and can think of nothing, and you are all powerful with him."

"I must decline since he refuses you," was the decided answer, as Mrs. Snowdon moved away.

"Tavia, dear, do go. We must have him; he always obeys you, and you would be such a public benefactor, you know."

Without a word Octavia wrote a line and sent it by a servant. Several minutes passed, and the gentlemen began to lay wagers on the success of her trial.

"He will not come for me, you may be sure," said Octavia.

As the words passed her lips he appeared.

A general laugh greeted him, but, taking no notice of the jests made at his expense, he turned to Octavia, saying, quietly:

"What can I do for you, cousin?"

His colourless face and weary eyes reproached her for disturbing him, but it was too late for regret, and she answered, hastily:

"We are in want of some new and amusing occupation to wile away the evening. Can you suggest something appropriate?"

"Why not sit round the hall fire and tell stories, while we wait to see the old year out as we used to do long ago?" he asked, after a moment's thought.

"I told you so. There it is. Just what we want!"

And Sir Jasper looked triumphant.

"It's capital. Let us begin at once. It is past ten now, so we shall not have long to wait," cried Rose.

And, taking Sir Jasper's arm, she led the way to the hall.

A great fire always burned there, and in winter time thick carpets and curtains covered the stone floor and draped the tall windows. Plants blossomed in the warm atmosphere, and chairs and couches stood about invitingly.

The party was soon seated, and Mr. Treherne was desired to begin.

"We must have ghost stories, and in order to be properly thrilling and effective the lights must be put out," said Rose, who sat next him, and spoke first as usual.

This was soon done, and only a ruddy circle of firelight was left to oppose the rapt gloom that filled the hall, where shadows now seemed to lurk in every corner.

"Don't be very dreadful, or I shall faint away," pleaded Blanche, drawing nearer to Mr. Annon, for she had taken her sister's advice, and laid close siege to that gentleman's heart.

"I think your nerves will bear my little tale," replied Mr. Treherne. "When I was in India, four

years ago, I had a very dear friend in my regiment—a Scotchman. I'm half Scotch myself, you know, and clannish, of course.

"Mr. Gordon was sent up the country on a scouting expedition and never returned. His men reported that he had left them one evening to take a survey, and his horse came home riderless. We searched, but could not find a trace of him, and I was determined to discover and avenge his murder. About a month after his disappearance as I sat in my tent one fearfully hot day, suddenly the canvas door flap was raised, and there stood Mr. Gordon. I saw him as plainly as I see you, Sir Jasper, and should have sprung to meet him, but something held me back. He was deathly pale, dripping with water, and in his bonny blue eyes was a wild, woeful look that made my blood run cold. I stared wildly, for it was awful to see my friend so changed and so unearthly. Stretching out his arm to me, he took my hand, saying, solemnly, 'Come.' The touch was like ice. An ominous thrill ran through me. I started up to obey, and he was gone."

"A horrid dream, of course. Is that all?" asked Rose.

With his eyes on the fire, and his left hand half extended, Mr. Treherne went on, as if he had not heard her:

"I thought it was a fancy, and soon recovered myself, for no one had seen or heard anything of Gordon, and my native servant lay just outside my tent. A strange sensation remained in the hand the phantom touched. It was cold, damp, and white. I found it vain to try to forget this apparition. It took strong hold of me. I told Yermid, my man, and he bade me consider it a sign that I was to seek my friend."

"That night I dreamed I was riding up the country in great haste. What led me I know not, but I pressed on and on, longing to reach the end. A half-dried river crossed my path, and, riding down the steep bank to ford it, I saw Gordon's body lying in the shallow water, looking exactly as the vision looked. I woke in a strange mood, told the story to my commanding officer, and, as nothing was doing just then, easily got leave of absence for a week. Taking Yermid, I set out on my sad quest. I thought it folly, but I could not resist the impulse that drew me on."

"For seven days I searched, and the strangest part of the story is that all that time I went on exactly as in the dream, seeing what I saw then, and led by the touch of the cold hand on mine. On the seventh day I reached the river, and found my friend's body."

"How horrible! Is it really true?" cried Mrs. Snowdon.

"As true as I'm a living man. Nor is that all. This left hand of mine has never been warm since that time. See and feel for yourselves."

He opened both hands, and all satisfied themselves that the left was smaller, paler, and colder than the right.

"Pray, someone, tell another story to put this out of my mind; it makes me nervous," said Blanche.

"I'll tell one, and you may laugh to quiet your nerves. I want to have mine done with, so that I can enjoy the rest with a free mind."

With these words Rose began her tale in the good old fashion:

"Once upon a time, when we were paying a visit to my blessed grandmamma, I saw a ghost in this wise. The dear old lady was ill with a cold and kept her room, leaving us to mope, for it was very dull in the great, lonely house. Blanche and I were both homesick, but did not like to leave till she was better, so we ransacked the library, and solaced ourselves with all manner of queer books. One day I found grandmamma very low and nervous, and evidently with something on her mind. She would say nothing, but the next day she was worse, and I insisted on knowing the cause, for the trouble was evidently mental. Charging me to keep it from Blanche, who was, and is, a sad coward, she told me that a spirit had appeared to her two successive nights. 'If it comes a third time, I shall prepare to die,' said the foolish old lady. 'No you won't, for I'll come and stay with you and frighten away your ghost,' I said. With some difficulty I made her yield, and after Blanche was asleep I slipped away to grandmamma with a book and candle for a long watch, as the spirit did not appear till after midnight."

"She usually slept with her door unlocked, in case of fire or fright, and her maid was close by. That night I locked the door, telling her that spirits could come through the wall if they chose, and I preferred to have a fair trial. Well, I read, chatted and dozed till dawn, and nothing appeared, so I laughed at the whole affair, and the old lady pretended to be convinced that it was all a fancy. Next night I slept in my own room, and in the morning was told that not only grandmamma, but Janet had seen the spirit all in white, with streaming hair, a pale face and a red streak at the throat. It came and parted the bed curtains, looking in for a moment and then vanished. Janet had slept with grandmamma, and kept a lamp burning on the chimney-piece, so that both saw it. I was puzzled, but not frightened; I never am, and I insisted on trying again. The door was left unlocked, as on the previous night, and I lay with grandmamma, a light burning as before. About two she clutched me as I was dropping off to sleep. I looked, and there, peeping in between the dark curtains, was a pale face with long hair all about it, and a red streak at the throat. It was very dim, the light being low, but I saw it, and after one breathless minute sprang up, caught my foot, fell down with a crash, and by the time I was round the bed not a vestige of the thing appeared. I was angry, and vowed I would succeed at all hazards, though I will confess I was a little daunted. Next time Janet and I sat up in an easy-chair, with bright lights burning, and both wide awake with the strongest coffee we could make. As the hour drew near we got nervous, and when the white shape came gliding in Janet hid her face. I did not, and after one look was on the point of laughing, for the spirit was Blanche walking in her sleep. She wore a coral necklace in those days, and never took it off, and her long hair half hid her face, which had the unnatural look somnambulists always wear. I had the sense to keep still and tell Janet what to do, so the poor child went back un-awaked, and grandmamma's spirit never walked again, for I took care of that."

"Why did you haunt the old lady?" asked Mr. Annon, as the laughter ceased.

"I don't know, unless it was that I wanted to ask leave to go home, and was afraid to do it awake, so tried when asleep. I shall not tell any story, as I was the heroine of this, but will give my turn to you, Mr. Annon," said Blanche, with a soft glance, which was quite thrown away, for the gentleman's eyes were fixed on Octavia, who sat on a low ottoman at Mrs. Snowdon's feet, in the full glow of the firelight.

"I have had very small experience in ghosts, and can only recall a little fright I had once when a boy at college. I had been out to a party, got home tired, could not find my matches and retired in the dark. Towards morning I woke, and, glancing up to see if the dim light was dawn or moonshine, I was horrified to see a coffin standing at the bed's foot. I rubbed my eyes to be sure I was awake, and looked with all my might. There it was, a long black coffin, and I saw the white plate in the dusk, for the moon was setting and my curtain was drawn. 'It's some trick of the fellows,' I thought;

'I'll not betray myself, but keep cool.' Easy to say but hard to do, for it suddenly flashed into my mind that I might be in the wrong room. I glanced about, but there were the familiar objects as usual, as far as the indistinct light allowed me to see, and I made sure by feeling on the wall at the bed's head for my watch case. It was there, and mine beyond a doubt, being peculiar in shape and fabric. Had I been to a college wine party I could have accounted for the vision, but a quiet evening in a grave professor's well-conducted family could produce no ill effects. 'It's an optical illusion, or a prank of my companions. I'll sleep and forget it,' I said, and for a time endeavoured to do so, but curiosity overcame my resolve, and I soon peeped again. Judge of my horror when I saw the sharp, white outlines of a dead face, which seemed to be peeping up from the coffin. It gave me a terrible shock, for I was but a lad, and had been ill. I hid my face, and quaked like a nervous girl, still thinking it to be some joke, and too proud to betray fear, lest I should be laughed at. How long I lay there I don't know, but when I looked again the face was farther out, and the whole figure seemed rising slowly. The moon was nearly down, I had no lamp, and to be left in the dark with that dreadful thing was more than I could bear. Joke or earnest, I must end the panic, and running out of my room I roused my neighbour. He told me I was mad or drunk, but lit a lamp and returned with me to find my horror only a heap of clothes, thrown on the table in such a way that, as the moon's pale light shot in, it struck upon my black student gown, with a white card lying on it, and produced the effect of a coffin and plate. The face was a crumpled handkerchief, and what seemed hair a brown muffler. As the moon sank these outlines changed, and incredible as it may seem, grew like a face. My friend, not having had the fright, enjoyed the joke, and 'coffin' was my sobriquet for a long while."

"You get worse and worse; Sir Jasper, do vary the horrors by a touch of fun, or I shall run away," said Blanche, gazing over her shoulder nervously.

"I'll do my best, and tell a story my uncle used to relate of his young days. I forget the name of the place, but it was some little country town, famous enough among anglers. My uncle often went there to fish, and always regretted that a deserted house near the trout stream was not occupied, for the ruin was inconveniently distant. Speaking of this one evening, as he sat in the landlady's parlour, he asked why no one took it, and let the rooms to strangers during the fishing season. 'For fear of the ghostesses, your honour,' replied the woman, and she proceeded to tell him that three distinct spirits haunted the house. In the garret was heard the hum of a wheel and the tap of high-heeled shoes, as the ghostly spinner went to and fro. In another chamber sounded the sharpening of a knife, followed by groans and the dripping of blood. The cellar was made awful by a skeleton sitting on a half-buried box and chuckling fiendishly. It seems a miser lived there once, and was believed to have starved his daughter in the garret, keeping her at work till she died. The second spirit was that of the girl's rejected lover, and the third of the miser, who was found dead on the money chest he was too feeble to conceal. My uncle laughed at all this, and offered to chase away the ghosts if anyone would take the house."

"This offer got abroad, and a miserly old fellow accepted it, hoping to turn a penny. He had a pretty daughter, whose love had been thwarted by the old man, and whose lover was going to sea in despair. My uncle knew this, and pitied the young people. He had made acquaintance with a wandering artist, and the two agreed to conquer the prejudice against the house by taking rooms there. They did so, and after satisfying themselves regarding the noises consulted a wise old woman as to the best means of frightening the ghosts. She told them if any young girl would pass a night in each haunted room, praying piously the while, that all would be well. Peggy was asked if she would do it, and being a stout-hearted lass she consented, for a good sum, to try it. The first night was in the garret, and Peggy, in spite of the prophecies of the village gossips, came out alive, though listeners at the door heard the weird humming and tapping all night long. The next night all went well, and from that night no more sharpening, groaning, or dripping was heard. The third time she bade her friends good-bye, and, wrapped in her red cloak, with a lamp and prayer-book went down into the cellar. Alas for pretty Peggy! when day came she was gone, and with her the miser's empty box, though his bones remained to prove how well she had done her work."

"The town was in an uproar, and the old man was furious. Some said the evil one had flown away with her, others that the bones were hers, and all agreed that henceforth another ghost would haunt the house. My uncle and the artist did their best

to comfort the father, who sorely reproached himself for thwarting the girl's love, and declared that if Jack would find her he should have her. But Jack had sailed, and the old man was left lamenting. The house was freed from its unearthly visitors however, for no ghost appeared, and, when my uncle left, old Martin found money and letters informing him that Peggy had spent her first two nights preparing for flight, and on the third had gone away to marry and sail with Jack. The noises had been produced by the artist, who was a ventriloquist, the skeleton had been smuggled from the surgeons, and the whole thing was a conspiracy to help Peggy and accommodate the fishermen."

"It is evident that roguery is hereditary," laughed Rose, as the narrator paused.

"I strongly suspect that Sir Jasper the second was the true hero of that story," added Mrs. Snowdon.

"Think what you like, I've done my part, and leave the stage for you, madam."

"I will come last. It is your turn, dear." As Mrs. Snowdon softly uttered the last word, and Octavia leaned upon her knee with an affectionate glance, Mr. Treherne leaned forward to catch a glimpse of the two changed faces, and looked as if bewildered when both smiled at him as they sat hand-in-hand while the girl told her story.

"Long ago a famous actress suddenly dropped dead at the close of a splendidly played tragedy. She was carried home, and preparations were made to bury her. The play had been got up with great care and expense, and a fine actor was the hero. The public demanded a repetition, and an inferior person was engaged to take the dead lady's part. A day's delay had been necessary, but when the night came the house was crowded. They waited both before and behind the curtain for the debut of the new actress with much curiosity. She stood waiting for her cue, but as it was given, to the amazement of all, the great tragedienne glided upon the stage, pale as marble, and with a strange fire in her eyes, a peculiar pathos in her voice, extraordinary power in her acting, she went through her part, and at the close vanished as mysteriously as she came. Great was the excitement that night, and intense the astonishment next day when it was whispered abroad that the dead woman never had revived, but had laid in her coffin before the eyes of watchers all the evening, while hundreds fancied they were applauding her at the theatre. The mystery never was cleared up, and Paris was divided by two opinions; one that some person marvellously like Madame G. had personated her for the sake of a sensation; the other that the ghost of the dead actress, unable to free itself from the old duties, so full of fascination to an ambitious and successful woman, had played for the last time the part which had made her famous."

"Where did you read that, 'Tavias? It's very like a French story, and not bad if you invented it," said Sir Jasper.

"I read it in an old book, where it was much better told. Now, Edith, there is just time for your tale."

As the word "Edith" passed her lips, again Mr. Treherne started and eyed them both, again they smiled as Mrs. Snowdon caressed the smooth cheek leaning on her knee, and looking full at him began the last recital:

"You have been recounting the pranks of imaginary ghosts, let me show you the workings of some real spirits, evil and good, that haunt every heart and home, making its misery or joy. At Christmas time, in a country house, a party of friends met to keep the holidays, and very happily they might have done so had not one person marred the peace of several. Love, jealousy, deceit, and nobleness were the spirits that played their freaks with these people. The person of whom I speak was more haunted than the rest, and much tormented, being wilful, proud, and jealous. Heaven help her; she had no one to exorcise those ghosts for her, and they goaded her to do much harm. Among these friends there were more than one pair of lovers, and much tangling of plots and plans, for hearts are wayward and mysterious things, and cannot love as duty bids or prudence counsels. This woman held the key to all the secrets of the house, and, having a purpose to gain, she used her power selfishly for a time. To satisfy a doubt she feigned a fancy for a gentleman who once did her the honour of admiring her, and, to the great scandal of certain sage persons, permitted him to show his regard for her, knowing that it was but a transient amusement on his part as well as upon hers. In the hands of this woman lay a secret which could make or mar the happiness of the best and dearest of the party. The evil spirits which haunted her urged her to mar their peace, and gratify a sinful hope. On the other side honour, justice, and generosity prompted her to make them happy, and while she wavered there came to her a sweet enchantress, who, with a word, banished the



tormenting ghost for ever, and gave the haunted woman a talisman to keep her free henceforth."

There the earnest voice faltered, and with a sudden impulse Mrs. Snowdon bent her head and kissed the fair forehead which had bent lower and lower as she went on.

Each listener understood the truth, lightly veiled in that hasty fable, and each found in it a different meaning. Sir Jasper frowned and bit his lips, Mr. Annon glanced anxiously from face to face, Octavia hid hers, and Mr. Treherne's flashed with sudden intelligence, while Rose laughed low to herself, enjoying the scene. Blanche, who was getting sleepy, said, with a stifled yawn:

"That is a pretty, moral little story, but I wish there had been some real ghosts in it."

"There was; will you come and see them?"

As she put the question Mrs. Snowdon rose abruptly, wishing to end the *seance*, and beckoning them to follow, glided up the great staircase. All obeyed, wondering what whim possessed her, and quite ready for any jest in store for them.

#### CHAPTER VIII.

She led them to the north gallery, and, pausing at the door, said, merrily:

"The ghost, or ghosts rather, for there were two, were Sir Jasper and myself, meeting to discuss certain important matters which concerned Mr. Treherne. If you want to see spirits we will play phantom for you, and thus be convinced of our power."

"Good; let us go and have a ghostly dance as a proper finale of our revel," answered Rose as they flocked into the long hall.

At that moment the great clock struck twelve, and all paused to bid the old year adieu.

Sir Jasper was the first to speak, for, angry with Mrs. Snowdon, yet thankful to her for making a jest to others of what had been earnest to him, he desired to hide his chagrin under a gay manner, and, taking Rose round the waist, was about to waltz away as she proposed, saying, cheerily:

"Come, one and all, and dance the new year in!" when a cry from Octavia arrested him, and, turning, he saw her stand, pale and trembling, pointing to the far end of the hall.

Eight narrow Gothic windows pierced either wall of the north gallery. A full moon sent her silvery light strongly in upon the eastern side, making broad bars of brightness across the floor. No fires burned there now, and wherever the moonlight did not fall deep shadows lay. As Octavia cried out all looked and all distinctly saw a tall, dark figure moving noiselessly across the second bar of light far down the hall.

"Is it some jest of yours?" asked Sir Jasper of Mrs. Snowdon as the form vanished in the shadow.

"No, upon my honour, I know nothing of it. I only meant to relieve Octavia's superstitious fears by showing her our pranks," was the whispered reply as Mrs. Snowdon's cheek paled, and she drew nearer to Sir Jasper.

"Who is there?" called out Mr. Treherne, in a commanding tone.

No answer, but a faint, cold breath of air seemed to sigh along the arched roof, and die away as the dark figure crossed the third streak of moonlight. A strange awe fell upon them all, and no one spoke, but stood watching for the appearance of the shape. Nearer and nearer it came with soundless steps, and as it reached the sixth window its outlines were distinctly visible. A tall, wasted figure, all in black, with a rosary hanging from the girdle, and a dark beard half concealing the face.

"The abbot's ghost, and very well got up," said Mr. Annon, trying to laugh, but failing decidedly, for again the cold breath swept over them, causing a general shudder.

"Hush!" whispered Mr. Treherne, drawing Octavia to his side with a protecting gesture.

Once more the phantom appeared and disappeared, and as they waited for it to cross the last bar of light that lay between it and them, Mrs. Snowdon stepped forward to the edge of the shadow in which they stood, as if to confront the apparition alone. Out of the darkness it came, and in the full radiance of the light it paused.

Mrs. Snowdon, being nearest, saw the face first, and, uttering a faint cry, dropped down upon the stone floor, covering her eyes. Nothing human ever looked like that of the ghastly, hollow-eyed, pale-lipped countenance below the hood. All saw it and held their breath as it slowly raised a shadowy arm and pointed a shrivelled finger at Sir Jasper.

"Speak, whatever you are, or I'll quickly prove whether you are man or spirit," cried Sir Jasper, fiercely, stepping forward as if to grasp the extended arm, that seemed to menace him alone.

An icy gust swept through the hall, and the phantom slowly receded into the shadow. Sir Jasper sprang after it, but nothing crossed the second stream of light, and nothing remained in the shade. Like one possessed by a sudden fancy, he rushed down the gallery, to find all dead and empty, and to return looking very strange.

Blanche had fainted away, and Mr. Annon was bearing her out of the hall.

Rose was clinging to Mrs. Snowdon, and Octavia leaned against her cousin, saying, in a fervent whisper:

"Thank heaven it did not point at you!"

"Am I then dearer than your brother?" he whispered back.

There was no audible reply, but one little hand involuntarily pressed his, though the other was outstretched towards Sir Jasper, who came up pale and startled, but firm and quiet. Affecting to make light of it, he said, forcing a smile as he raised Mrs. Snowdon:

"It is some stupid joke of the servants. Let us think no more of it. Come, Edith, this is not like your usual self."

"It was nothing human, Jasper—you know it as well as I. Oh, why did I bring you here to meet the warning phantom that haunts your house?"

"Nay, if my time be near the spirit would have found me out wherever I might be. I have no faith in that absurd superstition. I laugh at and defy it. Come down and drink my health in wine from the abbot's own cellar."

But as no one had inclination for farther gaiety, and, finding Lady Treherne alarmed, they were forced to tell her all, and find their own bewilderment deepened by her unalterable belief in the evil omen.

At her command the house was searched, the servants cross-questioned, and every effort made to discover the identity of the apparition. All in vain: the house was as usual, and not a man or maid but turned pale at the idea of entering the gallery at midnight. At Lady Treherne's request, all promised to say no more about the mystery, and separated at last to gain such repose as they could enjoy. Very grave were the faces gathered about the breakfast-table next morning, and very anxious the glances cast on Sir Jasper as he came in, late as usual, looking uncommonly blithe and well. Nothing serious ever made a deep impression on his mercurial nature. Mr. Treherne had more the air of a doomed man, being very pale and worn, in spite of an occasional gleam of happiness as he looked at Octavia. He haunted Sir Jasper like a shadow all the morning, much to that gentleman's annoyance, for both his mother and sister hung about him with ill-dissembled anxiety. By afternoon his patience gave way, and he openly rebelled against the tender guard kept over him. Ringing for his horse, he said, decidedly:

"I'm bored to death with the solemnity which pervades the house to-day, so I'm off for a brisk gallop before I lose my temper and spirits altogether."

"Come with me in the pony-carriage, Jasper. I've not had a drive with you for a long while, and should enjoy it so much," said Lady Treherne, detaining him.

"Mrs. Snowdon looks as if she needed air to revive her roses, and the pony-carriage is just the thing for her, so I will cheerfully resign my seat to her," he answered, laughing, as he forced himself from his mother's hand.

"Take the girls in the clarence, we all want a breath of air, and you are the best whip we know. Be gallant and say yes, dear."

"No, thank you, 'Tavia, that won't do. Rose and Blanche are both asleep, and you are dying to go and do likewise, after your vigils last night. As a man and a brother I beg you'll do so, and let me ride as I like."

"Suppose you ask Mr. Annon to join you," began Mr. Treherne, with well-assumed indifference; but Sir Jasper frowned and turned sharply on him, saying, half petulantly, half jocosely:

"Upon my life one would think I was a boy, a baby, by the manner in which you keep guard over me to-day. If you think I am going to live in daily fear of some mischief, you are all much mistaken. Ghost or no ghost, I shall make merry while I can; a short life and a jolly one has always been my motto, you know, so fare you well till dinner time."

They watched him gallop down the avenue, and then went their different ways still burdened with a nameless foreboding. Octavia strolled into the conservatory, thinking to refresh herself with the balmy silence which pervaded the place, but Mr. Annon soon joined her, full of a lover's hopes and fears.

"Miss Treherne, I have ventured to come for my answer. Is my New Year to be a blissful or a sad one?" he asked, eagerly.

"Forgive me if I give you an unwelcome reply, but I must be true, and so regretfully refuse the honour you do me," she said, sorrowfully

"May I ask why?"

"Because I do not love you."

"And you do love your cousin," he cried, angrily, pausing to watch her half-averted face.

She turned it fully towards him, and answered, with her native sincerity:

"Yes, I do, with all my heart, and my mother will not thwart me, for Maurice has saved my life, and I am free to devote it all to him."

"Happy man, I wish I had been a cripple," sighed Mr. Annon; then with a manful effort to be just and generous, he added, heartily, "Say no more, he deserves you. I want no sacrifice to duty; I yield, and go away praying heaven to bless you now and always."

He kissed her hand, and left to seek Lady Treherne, and make his adieu, for no persuasion could keep him. Leaving a note for Sir Jasper, he hurried away, to the great relief of Mr. Treherne and the deep regret of Blanche, who, however, lived in hopes of another trial later in the season.

"Here comes Sir Jasper, mamma, safe and well," cried Octavia, an hour or two later, as she joined her mother on the terrace, where my lady had been pacing restlessly to and fro nearly ever since her son rode away.

With a smile of intense relief she waved her handkerchief as he came clattering up the drive, and seeing her he answered with hat and hand. He usually dismounted at the great hall door, but a sudden whim made him ride along the wall, that lay below the terrace, for he was a fine horseman, and Mrs. Snowdon was looking from her window; as he approached it a bird flew screaming just before the horse's eyes as his master was in the act of dismounting. The spirited creature was startled, sprang part of the way up the low, broad steps of the terrace, and, being sharply checked, slipped, fell, and horse and man rolled down together.

Never did those who heard it forget the cry that escaped Lady Treherne's lips as she saw the fall. It brought out both guests and servants, to find Octavia recklessly struggling with the frightened horse, and Lady Treherne down upon the stones with her son's bleeding head in her arms.

They bore in the senseless, shattered body, and for hours tried everything that skill and science could devise to save the young man's life. But every effort was in vain, and as the sun set Sir Jasper lay dying. Conscious at last, and able to speak, he looked about him with a troubled glance, and seemed struggling with some desire that overmastered pain, and held death at bay.

"I want Maurice," he feebly said, at length.

"Dear lad, I'm here," answered his cousin's voice, from a seat in the shadow of the half-drawn curtains.

"Always near when I need you. Many a scrape have you helped me out of, but this is beyond your power; and a faint smile passed over Sir Jasper's lips as the past flitted before him. But the smile died away, and a groan of pain escaped him as he cried, suddenly, "Quick, let me tell it before it is too late. Maurice never will, but will bear the shame all his life that my dead name should remain untarnished. Bring Edith; she must hear the truth."

She was soon there, and, lying in his mother's arms, one hand in his cousin's, and one on his sister's bent head, Sir Jasper rapidly told the secret which had burdened him for a year.

"I did it, I forged my uncle's name when I had lost so heavily at play that I dared not tell my mother, or squander more of my own fortune. I deceived Maurice, and let him think the cheque a genuine one; I made him present it and get the money, and when all went well I fancied all was safe. But my uncle discovered it secretly, said nothing, and, believing Maurice the forger, disinherited him. I never knew this till my uncle died, and then it was too late. I confessed to Maurice, and he forgave me; he said, 'I am helpless now, shut out from the world, with nothing to lose or gain, and soon to be forgotten by those who once knew me, so let the suspicion of shame, if any such there be, still cling to me, and do you go your way, rich, happy, honourable, and untouched by any shadow in your fame.' Mother, I let him do it, unconscious as he was that many knew the secret sin, and fancied him the doer of it."

"Hush, Jasper, let it pass, I can bear it; I promised your dear father to be your staunch friend through life, and I have kept my word."

"Heaven knows you have, but now my life ends and I cannot die till you are cleared. Edith, I told you half the truth, and you would have used it against him had not some angel sent this girl to touch your heart. You have done your part to atone for the past, now let me do mine. Mother, 'Tavia loves him, he has risked life and honour for me, repay him generously, and give him this."

With feeble touch Sir Jasper tried to lay his sis-

ter's hand in Mr. Treherne's as he spoke. Mrs. Snowdon helped him, and as she bowed her head in silent acquiescence a joyful smile shone on the dying man's face.

"One more confession, and then I am ready," he said, looking up into the face of the woman whom he had loved with all the power of a shallow nature. "It was a jest for you, Edith, but it was bitter earnest to me, for I loved you, sinful as it was. Ask your husband to forgive me, and tell him it was better I should die than live to mar a good man's peace. Kiss me once, and make him happy for my sake."

She touched his cold lips with remorseful tenderness, and in the same breath registered a vow to obey that dying prayer.

"Tavia, dear Maurice, my brother, heaven bless you both. Good-bye, mother; he will be a better son than I have been to you."

Then, the reckless spirit of the man surviving to the last, Sir Jasper laughed faintly as he seemed to beckon some invisible shape, and died saying, gaily: "Now, Father Abbot, lead on, I'll follow you."

A year later three weddings were celebrated on the same day and in the same church. Maurice Treherne, now perfectly recovered, led up his cousin. Frank Annon rewarded Blanche's patient siege with an unconditional surrender, and, to the infinite amusement of Mrs. Grady, Major Royston publicly confessed himself out-generalled by merry Rose. The triple wedding-feast was celebrated at Treherne Abbey, and no uncomely visitor marred its festivities, for never again was the north gallery haunted by the ghostly abbot.

THE END.

## SWEET ROSES YANGLED.

### CHAPTER LXXVI.

FROM the character of the evidence given it was clear that a reaction in favour of Mr. Denham had taken place in the minds of those who had been foremost in accusing him on the previous night. Even the facts that told most against him were softened in the relation, and the face of the judge cleared as he listened to the revelations of the successive witnesses who were brought forward to give their testimony.

The calm and noble face of the prisoner, his undimmed bearing, favourably impressed all who saw him; and, when the evidence was summed up, not one listener regretted that the verdict must be on the side of mercy.

The charge of murder against Mr. Denham was dismissed, and he was pronounced free to go whither he would, without obstruction from the laws of his country.

Loud shouts of applause informed the throng on the outside of the house of the result of his examination, and he arose amid the tumult and made a brief speech, in which he thanked them for the kindly feeling that dictated these demonstrations. Mr. Denham went on to say that he could not rest contented under the imputation of so foul a crime as the midnight assassination of the man with whom he had been reared as a brother. He pledged his word to do all that was possible towards the discovery of the murderer, and bringing him to justice.

He sat down amid renewed acclamations, and Mr. Hastings hurriedly said to him:

"Let us escape through the back office. There is a door opening on a side street, and we can get away without running the gauntlet of the excited crowd outside."

"That is what I most earnestly wish to do," was the reply; but to make their way out of the courtroom was not so easy.

Friends crowded around Mr. Denham with congratulations on the result of the examination, and it was nearly an hour before they found themselves in the narrow street at the farther end of which Mr. Hastings's carriage had been stationed.

A message was dispatched to Mrs. Langley's driver informing him that Mr. Denham had left town with a friend, and he was ordered to remain till Mr. Wallis and Mr. Talbot were ready to be taken home.

When they were alone in the carriage Mr. Hastings took the hand of the young man in his own and held it firmly clasped, though he did not speak till they were some distance from the town.

Mr. Denham saw that he was struggling with extreme agitation, and he made no attempt to break the silence. In truth, his own feelings were in such a tumult of excitement that he was glad of an interval of silence in which to compose them. At length it was broken by Mr. Hastings, who fervently said:

"Thank heaven that you are safe, Guy! If you had been condemned this day I should have felt that

my own carelessness had caused this evil to fall on you. But for the use of your pistol by the assassin suspicion could never have been fixed on you. I have seen it all the winter lying in that window, yet neglected to return it to you. Had I done so this painful accusation could never have been made."

"Do not blame yourself, dear sir. No one could have dreamed of such a result as this from your forgetfulness and my own. I ought to have reclaimed the weapon long since, but unfortunately I forgot all about it. You believe me innocent, Mr. Hastings; but the question then arises as to who could have removed the pistol to use it in this dreadful manner? I am anxious to learn if your suspicions agree with those expressed by my sister this morning, and I may add with those I have formed myself."

The eyes of the listener dilated, and his lips trembled as he asked:

"What do you mean? Whom does Mrs. Langley suspect as the author of all this misery?"

Mr. Denham hesitated a moment before replying:

"I would at present speak of this to no other person than yourself, Mr. Hastings; for, after all, we may cruelly wrong that poor girl; but to you is due an explanation of what I intend to do with reference to a person who was lately an inmate of your family before I take such steps as may compromise her in any way."

Mr. Hastings sank back with a groan that was almost a cry of anguish, and Mr. Denham saw with dismay that he was clutching at his necktie as if choking. Fearing that he might have a fit, he hastened to assist him in every possible way, and he presently began to recover from his overwhelming agitation.

He feebly said:

"I have borne a great deal in the last few hours, and I am quite unfit to give my attention to any new phase of this sad affair; yet I cannot rest without hearing your last words explained. Whom would you accuse? Yet why do I ask, for your words clearly pointed to the friendless creature who is by this time far away. It will be useless to attempt to criminate Miss Gordon, for she can easily prove an alibi. She was on her way before the—the assassination took place."

"I am aware of that, sir: you will permit me to state the grounds of my sister's suspicions, though I confess that I attach but little importance to them."

With feverish eagerness Mr. Hastings replied:

"State them, by all means. I am most anxious to understand them. Mrs. Langley is a very keen woman—one gifted with unusual discernment, I know, but she should not be too eager to condemn one of her own sex on such flimsy evidence as, I am sure, must have sufficed to her in this case."

"You shall hear and judge for yourself. This young lady is nothing to you, and therefore I may speak freely on this painful subject."

A convulsive pang passed over the face of Mr. Hastings, and he faintly said:

"Nothing, no—go on, if you please."

Mr. Denham obeyed without seeming to remark his extreme agitation.

"Last autumn Anna and I met Miss Gordon at Newport, and you are probably aware that through my sister's means she was defeated in her efforts to secure the fortune of the old lady whose companion she then was. I had nothing to do with the plot that ruined her with Mrs. Hawks, and until the explosion occurred I knew nothing of the affair in progress. She was not treated quite fairly, I have always thought, and I do not think she ever forgave Anna for the part she then played. Mr. Fenton entered heart and soul into it, for he was most anxious at that time to secure the succession of Mrs. Hawks's estate to her niece, with whom he seemed deeply enamoured. You are probably aware that he and Miss Gordon had some love passages while he was a student. I am sure that a deeper impression was made on her heart than on his. I do not believe that she ever forgave Godfrey for the part he took against her, and I sometimes think that she came hither to take the opportunity to avenge herself upon him for first forsaking her and then helping to ruin the fabric of prosperity she had industriously reared for herself."

"I knew much of this before, and I do think that she was badly treated. But Rosa was forgiving to him at least, for she loved Godfrey. She admitted this to me herself, and entreated me to send her away before he gave his hand to another."

"Unfortunately for her, that only strengthens the evidence against her. If Miss Gordon had ceased to love Mr. Fenton, she would never have done what my sister declares she did do. Shall I state to you the position she takes?"

"Why should you? This is all nonsense. Rosa was far on her way before the murder occurred."

"I beg that you will listen to me at least with patience, Mr. Hastings. Miss Gordon must have embarked on the Vicksburg, for she is the only packet due since she left Silvermere. That boat lay four hours at the landing below your place, last night, and but a mile lies between them. Anna insists that Miss Gordon found means to leave the steamer and commit the crime for which I have so narrowly escaped being imprisoned to-day. She thinks that Rosa possessed herself of my pistol that the odium of the deed might fall upon me, as a punishment to her for unmasking her last summer."

Mr. Hastings listened to him with working lips and a tremulous shaking of his whole frame, which showed how deep was the emotion that moved him. He huskily asked:

"But what can you do to bring this suspicion home to her? If Rosa be capable of doing such a thing, she will have craft enough to conceal every trace of her actions from others."

"I can do but one thing, sir, and that I have promised my sister to undertake. I shall secretly employ a detective to follow every step taken by Miss Gordon since you left her. This can be done without compromising her, till the truth is known. When I am satisfied of her guilt I shall of course have her arrested and brought to trial for this most terrible deed."

In tones of piercing anguish Mr. Hastings cried out: "Oh! heavens! this is too much! too much! This burden is more than I can bear; my heart is breaking under it."

In great alarm Mr. Denham exclaimed: "What is it, sir? What have I said to distress you so deeply? Why should you take the presumed guilt of this young girl so much to heart?"

Mr. Hastings leaned back several moments without speaking; then, in trembling tones, he said:

"Heaven never suffers a deep wrong to pass unpunished, even in this world; but the retribution it has sent to me is hard to bear. To save this wretched creature, I must cast myself upon your mercy, and lay bare the sin that has borne such bitter fruit."

"Guy Denham, I have known you from your boyhood, and you have never been guilty of a mean or unprincipled action. Would to heaven that I could say the same of myself; but I cannot—I cannot."

He paused, and, in a painful state of excitement as to what was to follow, Mr. Denham asked:

"To what does all this tend, Mr. Hastings? If you have anything to confide to me, I can truly say that your confidence will be held sacred, let its nature be what it may."

"I believe it—I am sure of it—and there is now no alternative. I must tell you the cruel secret that is corroding my life, and ask you, for my sake, to let this matter drop—to bear the stain of suspicion which can be wiped from your name only by pursuing and exposing the guilty one. Rosa Gordon must not be implicated in this dreadful affair if I can prevent it; for she has on me a claim so strong that I must, at all hazards, endeavour to shield her from punishment for the crime she committed."

"You believe that she did it, then; but I cannot understand why she is to be screened at my expense."

"Not unless you are generous enough to will it to be so, Guy; and when I have told you all you can decide for yourself. The unhappy girl who has entered my house as a demon of wrath is my own daughter."

The words were spoken almost in a whisper, but Mr. Denham heard and fully understood their meaning. He faintly repeated:

"Your daughter! Opal's sister! Oh, sir, this is a terrible position for you to be placed in. The resemblance between them is now accounted for."

"Yes, their features bear some likeness, but it ends there. Opal is as pure and good, as the other is fiery and unprincipled. Don't ask me why I brought her beneath my roof; it was madness in me to do such a thing, as the event has proved. But I wished to atone to her as far as possible for the wrong I had done her, and no other way seemed open to me. If she had not been ill unto death, I should never have betrayed the tie that binds us together; but when I believed her to be dying I told her all. Since that unfortunate hour she has wounded me in every possible way; and now she has completed her own ruin and broken my heart by this crowning outrage. If Rosa be pursued—if the murder of Godfrey is traced to her hand—the blighting record of past shame must be laid bare, and I shall refuse to live with the brand of dishonour upon my brow."

His head drooped upon his breast, and Mr. Denham surveyed his worn and haggard face with the deepest compassion. He was at a loss what to say in reply, and after a few moments Mr. Hastings resumed:



"Is it too much to ask of you, Guy, to spare the guilty one? for that Rosa is guilty I have not doubted for one moment since the event of last night occurred. But in giving her up to punishment you will drive me from my home for ever, separate me from the child who is really a comfort and delight to me, and compel me to end the few days that will be left to me in obscurity and loneliness."

"Why should that be necessary, sir?"

With some bitterness, Mr. Hastings replied:

"Why do you ask that when you know my wife so well? If she were told the history of those days during which Rosa was born, she would never forgive me for having had another wife, and having so long concealed it from her. I will, in justice to that woman, tell you all my villany. I deceived her basely. She believed the words spoken over us to be a genuine ceremony of marriage; but the time came when she knew better."

"As I hope for mercy hereafter, I swear to you, Guy, that I would have made such atonement as was possible, but she refused to accept it, and left me, she left behind her the child she would not claim because she was mine, and I did the best I could for her, hoping some day to be able to bring her beneath my own roof. I will tell you more than this, Guy Denham. Mrs. Markland knew the history of that early entanglement. She held it over me, and, dreading exposure to the woman I married, I submitted to her dictation respecting my daughter's marriage with her son. I knew that Opal did not love him as a girl should love the man she accepts as her husband; but I won her consent to give her hand to Godfrey through an appeal to her filial affection. I told her enough to enable her to understand that upon that union my domestic peace depended. She yielded, and now the tie I wickedly induced her to form is broken. She will suffer by the shock, but not as those suffer who have lost the one that is dearest to them on earth."

His voice sank away into a husky whisper, and Mr. Denham took his hand and eagerly said:

"I will not be less self-sacrificing than Opal has proved herself. I will never be the means of bringing before the world the knowledge of the tie which exists between her and that unhappy girl. Miss Gordon may escape scatheless for me, Mr. Hastings, for I pledge you my honour to take no steps against her. I can live down the imputations that have been cast upon my fair name, and I will do so. Accept this assurance as final, dear sir, and give yourself no farther uneasiness about the matter."

Mr. Hastings lifted his bowed head, and, with a sudden gleam of hope, asked:

"Will you indeed do this, Guy?" Such forbearance I could scarcely have expected, for I know that you have not been treated quite fairly by what has been lately done."

At these words a sudden glow came to the heart of Mr. Denham, and he asked himself if he dared interpret them to mean that Opal would have preferred herself to the man she had been induced to accept as her husband. Then came the chilling thought that in relinquishing the pursuit of the assassin he must give up all hope of eventually winning Opal; for his union with her would only strengthen the suspicion of others that he had put Godfrey Fenton out of the way because he could not see him take away from him the girl he so madly loved.

These thoughts flashed with rapidity through his mind, but his voice was clear and firm when he replied to the stricken man beside him:

"It matters not how I have been treated, sir. I again assure you that I would bear even worse than suspicion rather than clear my own name at such cost to you. Your unfortunate daughter shall not be suspected of this crime through any agency of mine. Your home—Opal's home—shall not be made desolate by my hand."

"Here we are at Silvermere. Will you go in and see your aunt?" abruptly asked Mr. Hastings.

"If she will consent to receive me. Dismiss from your mind all dread as to my proceedings, Mr. Hastings. I must make some effort to discover the assassin, but you may feel assured that I shall not set those I employ on the right track."

Mr. Hastings grasped his hand in silence, they descended from the carriage, and entered the house.

#### CHAPTER LXXVII.

THE stillness of the grave reigned within the house of death. At an early hour of the morning the inquest had been held over Mr. Fenton's body, and the verdict returned that he had died by some unknown hand.

Mr. Denham wrote a few lines on a card, informing his aunt of the result of his examination, and sent them up to her. The servant came back in a few moments with a request that he would go up to her

He found Mrs. Markland exhausted with weeping, and too wretched and restless to lie down.

She threw herself upon his bosom and cried out: "Oh, Guy! Guy! I should thank heaven that you are restored to me, if I could feel thankful for anything in the present state of my mind. There is no comfort for me—no light left in my life now he is gone! My son! my son! would that I could have died for thee!"

Mr. Denham gently placed her on a seat, and hastened to say everything that could soothe her grief; but Mrs. Markland seemed scarcely to listen to him.

When he paused there was a long and dreary silence, which she broke by suddenly saying:

"I have not been just to you, Guy; I did not carry out the intentions of my husband, though I fully understood them. In my selfish love for my own son, I hoarded for him alone what should have been equally divided between you. It shall be all yours now, Guy—every shilling. Can you pardon me for acting towards you as I have done from your boyhood?"

"Dear aunt, I have nothing to pardon. You have amply atoned for any wrong you may have done me by the noble course you took last night. We will not refer to affairs of business at this time. I shall remain near you; I will be to you a son in the place of the one you have lost if you will accept me as such. But I cannot take from you what should have been Godfrey's. Do with your own as you will; I have enough without it."

"But I shall never feel satisfied unless I am allowed to make such reparation as is in my power. We will not talk of it now, for I am not in a fit state to think of anything but the dreadful bereavement I have sustained."

"No, let us not speak of it now. When you have had time to reflect you will understand how impossible it will be for me to become the gainer by the unhappy event of last night. Do you wish me to go to Magnolia and give my orders there?"

"No, thank you. The steward has been this morning, and I have told him what must be attended to. To think that yesterday my boy was bright with health, hope, and happiness, and to-day they are digging his grave! I feel as if I cannot live through it."

"Dear Aunt Gertrude, it is indeed a terrible trial; but do not sorrow as one without hope. You have other children—draw them nearer to your heart, and in their affection find consolation for Godfrey's loss."

She shook her head almost fiercely.

"A pair of feeble girls. What have I to hope for from them that can gratify the pride which is the strongest feeling of my nature. Godfrey was the darling of my life, and in losing him I have lost all that made it bright to me."

Mr. Denham could not reason with her in her present state of feeling, and he felt the assurance in his own mind that, after the first bitterness of her bereavement had passed away, Mrs. Markland would naturally turn to her daughters to console and sustain her.

He left her calmer than when he entered, and on descending the stairs he sought the housekeeper to learn from her how her young lady was after the awful shock she had received.

Mr. Denham declined the use of the carriage, but set out to walk to Ashwood. He wished quietly to review the events of the last sixteen hours, and decide upon his own plan of action for the future. How he was to allay his sister's suspicions of Rosa, or reconcile her to the course he had pledged himself to pursue, he was at a loss to determine.

The confidence given him under such painful circumstances he felt must be held sacred; yet it seemed imperative that he should impart it to Mrs. Langley or she would herself proclaim aloud the conviction in her mind that Rosa Gordon's hand had given the doom to Mr. Godfrey Fenton.

Mr. Denham finally decided that he must be guided by circumstances; and if he found his sister immovable in her belief of Rosa's guilt, there would be no alternative but to disclose to her under a pledge of secrecy what had that morning been revealed to himself.

(To be continued.)

THE DEATHS IN ABBYSSINIA.—The belief seems to be general that because Abyssinia is in Africa, our troops have only heat to contend against during their campaign. If, however, recent authorities are correct, the soldiers will have need of very comfortable clothing to keep them warm. It is a common and rather cockney mistake to fancy that severe cold is altogether unknown in all parts of the sunny climes of the East and South. But we read of cold winds, ice, and snow in the mountainous districts of India and Persia, and even in the Land of Eden, at Diarbeker, according to the authority of the learned

Watton, once Visar of Sutton, the Tigris is there often unfordable from the melted snow swelling the river. Further, a medical authority warns the British seeking Egypt as a winter residence not to believe that it is always warm there, but to be "prepared against the dense cold fog rising from the river of a morning, while the houses are ill-adapted to shield the delicate against the inclemency of the weather."

## THE SILENT PARTNER.

### CHAPTER XXVI.

THE Lees had returned a few days after the flight of Miss Holden, but before any publicity had been given to that affair, and Alfred (who had obtained his discharge from the army) made it his first business to inquire whether Lucy were yet married. Not that he entertained the slightest hope of defeating the nuptials, but he thought it would be a great satisfaction to see her once more before she became Mrs. Burr, as after that event he was resolved never voluntarily to expose himself to the pain of meeting her.

Having heard that the wedding was yet in abeyance, and was to take place in about a fortnight, he called on the evening of the day after his arrival, and was received by his old enemy, Mark Holden, alone.

There was the chill of an iceberg in the look and manner of Holden as he gave two fingers to the young lieutenant to shake, and asked him if he would sit down, in a way that implied anything but a wish that he should comply with the invitation.

It was the fourth day after Lucy's *hégira*, and her father's face plainly showed the effects of his wrath and anxiety; but poor Alfred put it all down to vexation at his call, and he thought he saw plainly enough that Miss Holden was to be denied to him.

The stern man ignored all the adventures of the young soldier, who of course made no allusion to them himself.

To his inquiries after the ladies Mr. Holden replied:

"They are all engaged, or out, this evening, Mr. Lee. You will have to excuse them."

"Ah!—I am sorry. My respects to them, if you please," said Alfred, rising to go.

"You know, I suppose, that we are on the eve of an important event here," said the other, who was then still sanguine of recovering his daughter, "and—and—the ladies do not have much leisure."

"Yes—I understand, sir. Good evening."

"Good evening," said the other; and Alfred went off, more dispirited than ever. His wrath against Mr. Holden was unbounded.

He went home, trying to subdue his grief and to appear cheerful before his friends, and resolved to make no farther effort to see Lucy.

But three days afterwards he saw the advertisement which proclaimed her flight and offered a large reward for her restoration to her friends, and then all his feelings changed. New hope took possession of his mind, and new love, which, with pity for her sufferings and fear for her safety, plunged him into a vortex of intense excitement.

He at once gave himself vigorously to the work of looking for her—both in person and by agents. He employed detectives—he advertised in the "personal" columns of the papers, over the signature "Alfred L.," imploring her to give some clue to her retreat.

For a few days he was sanguine of success; but when weeks passed without bringing any response to these appeals his heart misgave him, and he indulged in the most gloomy forebodings.

The Holden advertisement had spoken of the missing girl as having "wandered from home during a slight aberration of mind, resulting from illness;" and the newspaper paragraphs which from time to time appeared on the subject spoke in a similar vein, and intimated fears that the unfortunate lady had committed suicide.

When Alfred learned, as he did (for somehow these secrets will come out), that Lucy had never heard of his escape, and that she had been suffered to believe that his dreadful sentence had been put into execution, he began to fear the worst—nay, to make sure of it. He knew her gentle, loving heart, and he could imagine how the intensity of her prolonged distress might drive her to madness.

After several weeks of this suspense these suspicions received a terrible confirmation.

The body of an unknown female was found in the river in a state which defied complete identification, but answering in size and shape, and in many minor particulars too closely to the lost girl to admit any reasonable doubt of the dreadful truth which had been so long suspected.

The Holdens, long harrowed by fears, gave a reluctant but decided acquiescence to the painful theory, and gave solemn and ostentatious sepulture to the de-

ceased, over whose remains a costly monument was reared.

If Mark Holden were conscience stricken he showed no signs of it. Remorse wrung no self-accusation from his steeled heart. There was something of the decency of grief in his deportment—but that it was unmitigated with wrath at the obstinacy of his daughter, or contempt for her folly, who shall say?

With that same dark frown with which he had heard of Lucy's flight—with that same stern compression of the lips, did he now take part in these sad obsequies; and whatever emotions may have raged within his breast, no eye could have been drier than that of this imperious man.

With Mrs. Holden the case was different. All the mother revealed itself in her when the conviction forced itself upon her mind that her daughter had been driven to madness and self-destruction by parental cruelty, and her moans and self-reproaches were terrible to hear and impossible to repress.

But upon Alfred Lee the blow fell with heaviest force. His grief following so closely upon his recent excitement and privations, proved too much for his exhausted powers, and prostrated him for weeks upon a bed of suffering, whence his recovery was for many days doubtful. But nature rallied, and he walked forth again a shadow of his former self, wondering often, wondering earnestly, at this his second escape from a death which he would gladly have welcomed as a refuge from irremediable grief. But there were others to live for besides himself, and he resolved to bear the burden of life as cheerfully as possible—not without hope that the goading memories which now tortured him might, with the lapse of time, lose something of their poignancy.

He had written to Mr. Hartley announcing his safety, and begging to be informed of his friend's condition, and especially whether any punishment had been inflicted upon him for his humanity, and also promising to watch diligently for an opportunity to transmit some funds to him. To this letter he had received the following brief reply:

"MY DEAR FRIEND,—I am so rejoiced to hear of your escape that I can think of nothing else. My punishment has been light, and it is passed. Hess does not fare so well. Do not send me any more money, for I do not need it; and if the sum were large I should not be permitted to receive it. My health improves. If I am exchanged I hope to be able to come and see you. My letter is short for obvious reasons.—Your friend  
Louis."

#### CHAPTER XXVII.

MR. BURR did not wear mourning for Miss Holden, nor did he attend the funeral.

He ignored his late engagement as far as possible, and broke off all intimacy with the Holden family. He secluded himself from society, though he was occasionally seen in business circles, but he no longer manifested his accustomed ardour in the chase of fortune. It was not grief but mortification that weighed him down.

That a young lady should commit suicide to escape marrying him, and that the world should know it, was a source of perpetual humiliation to Jedediah, as it well might be.

He had no confidants and few intimate friends; but he often felt a longing to unbosom himself to someone, and to hear some good-natured friend controvert the views which he took of his own position.

At the hotel where he boarded there was a beaming widow of thirty-six, or eight, plump and radiant—one of those few favoured mortals who seem born to attract all who come within their influence.

She had two tall daughters with her, two sons at boarding-school, and another at sea—in fact, her eldest son was a man in size, and almost so in years.

Mrs. Bright—such was her name—was in rather straitened circumstances, and was living, as she freely confessed, quite beyond her means, while she was seeking a home in the country.

Her husband had been supposed to be a prosperous merchant, and had always supported his family in good style, but when his estate was examined there were only a few thousands for the widow and children, who had been educated to an expensive style of living.

More than a year had passed since his death, during most of which time the widow had been permitted to occupy her former home, and when this had to be given up she had taken up her abode with her daughters preparatory to their removal to some retired home far away from the town.

How they were to make their way she had no distinct idea, but that the boys would have to come home from school, and that they would all have to endure privation and toil, she had no doubt.

But the widow always looked on the bright side of things, and she did not give way to forebodings.

She was so amiable and so kind to everybody, that Mr. Burr had made her his confidant while his marriage was in contemplation, and after it was broken off he was often tempted to go to her for sympathy and consolation.

It was long before he could make up his mind to such a step; but one afternoon he came home with an added depression, growing out of a loss of eight or ten thousand pounds in a Stock operation; and wondering what there was in life to compensate for all its troubles he sauntered into the ladies' parlour, where Mrs. Bright chanced to be all alone.

"Heigho! This is a world of trouble, Mrs. Bright!" said Jedediah, sitting down a little way from her, and drumming a sort of dead march on a table.

"For a poor widow with five children, yes," said the lady, looking anything but troubled; "but not for a rich single man like you, Mr. Burr."

"Rich! I've lost ten thousand pounds since yesterday morning."

"What of that? I daresay you have a hundred thousand left."

Jedediah smiled.

"Yes, I should hope so," he said. "Four times that and more, Mrs. Bright; but I'd give half of it to-day to—"

"What?" asked the widow.

"To recall the past," said Mr. Burr, rising and walking across the room towards where the lady sat, covering half the sofa with her voluminous crinoline.

The widow pulled in her robes slightly as he approached, as if to make room for him, and Jedediah, taking the hint, sat down beside her.

"How much of the past does my unhappy friend wish to recall?" asked Mrs. Bright, smiling enough to show the edges of her glittering teeth.

"I'll tell you, madam. Since I have heretofore made you my confidant when—I was happy, I will do the same in my present absolute misery, provided it is not disagreeable to you."

"Certainly not; I feel honoured by such a proof of your friendship. But 'absolute misery' is a strong term, Mr. Burr."

"Not too strong for my case. I wish I knew one stronger. I would use that. As it is, I say absolute misery."

"I am sure that I am sorry for you, sir."

"You ask me how much of the past I would recall. Just five months, which would take me back to a period previous to my engagement to Miss Holden."

"But, my dear sir, bereavement is a common—"

"Bah! I am not suffering from bereavement, madam. You know better."

"I—beg your pardon."

"I am not suffering from bereavement."

Mrs. Bright replied only by a look.

"You know," continued Jedediah, "what the world says about this matter—"

The widow shook her head slowly.

"And if you do not, or if you are too good-natured to own it, I at least do. It says that Lucy was neither ill nor insane, except that she was made so by the attempt to compel her to marry a man too old for her, and whom she did not like. It says that she ran away from home to get rid of me, and that she drowned herself to get rid of me. That's what it says."

"You shock me. I know the world is censorious; but I have never heard this."

"Yet it would not be so very wrong if it would lay the blame where it chiefly belongs."

"And that is—"

"On Mr. Holden, who wanted a rich son-in-law, and who made me believe that I was a welcome suitor to his daughter."

"Yes. And you, were not you a little too willing, to believe this improbability in the face of some evident signs to the contrary? I only guess at this, Mr. Burr; for I want you to take your share of the blame."

"I admit it, my dear madam," said Jedediah, humbly; "but I did not know the strength of her attachment to Mr. Lee. I did not know his extraordinary history, or that she believed him dead; and it certainly was not I who withheld from her the knowledge of his escape."

"No; your share of the wrong done to Miss Holden seems to be small. What matter, then, what the world says?"

"A great deal. People turn and stare at me in the streets, children whisper and point me out, I am paragraphed in the papers, I expect daily to be caricatured in the shop windows, and I have three men under pay to watch daily the cheap song-stands to buy up and suppress the doggerel song which I know will be published about me."

"You are too sensitive. A small part of these evils only exists in reality, the rest your morbid fancy creates. Of course there is a little natural curiosity

with regard to you just now—nothing more. The caricature and songs which you dread will never appear, and people will cease to stare at you."

"Do you think so?"

"I do, indeed."

"You are very kind. You give me comfort. But those were certainly terrible things in the news papers."

"I did not see them. Think how few did—except entire strangers to you."

"Yes, there is comfort in that; but there will be more, and I can't bear them—I'm sure I can't."

"I think I could tell you—"

The widow hesitated, and a slightly heightened colour was visible in her rosy cheeks.

"What?"

"How to neutralize all such attacks, even if they be made."

"Pray tell me, then, dear madam," said Jedediah, eagerly, making a motion as if he would have seized the widow's hand, in his thoughtless way.

"You should brave public opinion instead of bending to it. People never laugh much at those who do not heed them."

"True. Why, you are quite a philosopher. But what shall I do? There's my house and furniture. I dare not sell off the things at an auction, as I want to, for I know what the jeering crowd will say when they get together there. The very auctioneer will make fun of it; I see his eyes twinkle and the smile twitching at the corners of his mouth, as he puts up the articles in the bride's boudoir, and comments on their beauty."

"You are ingenious at self-torture."

"But I ask again—what shall I do? How shall I brave public opinion?"

"Do whatever you choose, only do it boldly and openly. But if I might suggest—"

There was another little blush.

"Pray do not hesitate. You are a most sensible woman."

The blush did not diminish as Mrs. Bright continued:

"I should advise you to marry someone else, very speedily, and commence housekeeping in style in that very house. Get a wife suited to your years, yet young enough and handsome enough to make some figure in the fashionable world, when dressed as you can afford to dress her. Spend your money freely for a year or two, give fine parties, and my word for it you'll shut the mouths of the babblers and have society at your feet."

Jedediah listened, open-mouthed, at this speech, and replied, in a transport:

"It's true, every word of it. Then we could travel, too."

"Don't think of such a thing until you have lived down public censure. Then you can go and come as you choose."

"Why, you are a Solomon in—in crinolines, my dear madam," said Mr. Burr, laughing, "and I'll certainly follow your advice, if—if—"

"What's the 'if' now, Mr. Burr?"

"Why, if I can find a lady to be sure—handsome, amiable, sensible, stylish—neither young nor old, and who will fancy me. *His labor, hoc opus est*. Excuse the Latin, but it means that it is a great deal of trouble."

Jedediah stared hard at the widow as he said this, and called some fresh colour to her cheeks. He talked on, walked about, surveying her from various points as he did so.

"There's Miss Boker, in this very house," continued the lady, with a covert smile. "A trifle too old perhaps—not quite handsome enough, and the least particle too—too—"

"Her name should begin with a P instead of a B."

Now the contrast between this maiden lady and the widow was in all respects so striking, and so immeasurably in favour of the latter, that if the result had been given it could not have been more telling in its effect upon the old bachelor.

His eyes sparkled as they ran again over the fresh, smiling face of his Mentor—over her beautiful bust, and leaped to the tiny feet peeping out from beneath her dress.

The two tall daughters came in from walking at this juncture.

They were blooming girls, both under seventeen, and the widow did not seem at all to regret the interruption. Would not they be ornaments to any household?

After a little small talk, and some giggling, the lively girls vanished as suddenly as they came, and Mr. Burr inquired, with a thoughtful air:

"How old are your daughters, Mrs. Bright?"

"Fourteen—and sixteen and a half, and a half, as the auctioneers say."

"And you have a son older?"

"Tom is nineteen."



"Older than you were when he was born, now, I'll be bound, madam."

"A little—yes. You are good at guessing."

"And you have two younger. Quite a family, I declare."

"Two dear boys. Oh, how I long to see them. We shall all be together soon, in the country."

"They're rather wild and rude, like all boys, I suppose?"

"Frank and Freddy wild! Oh, I only wish they were a little wild. They are too much like girls, the precious dears, so soft and gentle. There now—don't ask me any more questions about them if you don't wish me to make a simpleton of myself. But I have told you the truth."

So she said.

"Why do you take them from school?"

"Simply because I can't afford to keep them there."

"Oh! I—I—that could be—yes, I see."

The lady blushed and so did Jedediah, and yet the simple man of money had not the least idea that the bright widow was reading his thoughts, just as plainly as if they had been printed.

"I—I should like to see your boys, Mrs. Bright."

"Would you?" she said, with a surprised air.

"You are very kind. They are only at Hoboken, and as I go every Saturday to see them, I will bring them over the day after to-morrow to spend Sunday with me."

"Oh! I should like to go to Hoboken—it's a charming place. If you will allow me, I will—"

"Oh, certainly, if it be not too much trouble. I shall be glad to have company."

"We will consider it an engagement then," answered Jedediah, and the word sounded strangely in the lady's ears, who well knew that no *double entendre* was meant.

Thus ended the first condolence.

#### CHAPTER XXVIII

"MAMMA, it is impossible to stay here another week unless we have autumn bonnets and dresses," said Henrietta Bright, that evening, with an anxious look, quite in contrast with her recent mirthfulness. "If we are really as poor as you say, do let us go away and hide ourselves in the country as quickly as possible. I am ashamed to go out."

"It's terrible to be so poor," said Nelly, the second daughter; "but perhaps it won't be so bad when you get out of London, where there is nobody to see us."

"Aye! you are much mistaken, Nelly. There will be enough to see us and crow over us wherever we go. But as they will be strangers, perhaps it will not be quite so hard to bear."

"I don't know," replied the mother, thoughtfully.

"I expect an answer every day about that house. But there is positively no money for dress now. I can just pay for our living, and the children's board and schooling, out of the funds in hand, and what we are to do I don't know. Part of our little principal will have to go for furniture when we do get the house, and then our income will be again reduced."

"And there will be rent, provisions, and fuel."

"And clothes, and schooling, and a hundred little things," resumed the mother.

"It is terrible to be poor," repeated Nelly. "There are the Misses Gobleigh we met this afternoon, so magnificently dressed, just returned from Paris, and going for a month to Brighton. They looked so superciliously at us while they told us about it that I felt as if I should drop."

"You are a little goose, then. Mr. Gobleigh has made a fortune furnishing beef to the army. But when you were a baby (not so very long ago) he kept a shop and we bought our meats of him."

"It don't make any difference. They have money and we have not. I would sell meat, too; or codfish, or red herrings, or anything else, to get rich."

"Well," said the mother, smiling, "perhaps something will turn up, as Mr. Micawber says. Be patient. People never get out of trouble any sooner for grumbling."

"Mother is always so cheerful."

The widow laughed, and added:

"You promised to spend a day with the Wilkes, before we left town, didn't you?"

"Oh, yes," said the girls, eagerly. "Can we go?"

"You may go on Saturday. I can spare you money enough for that. Write to-morrow, and tell them you are coming."

Saturday came. The girls went at nine, and after they were gone the mother dressed herself with much care, to go and see her children at Hoboken.

Doubtless she was anxious to appear well before her little pets, for she had never in her life been more particular in the selection of her dress.

every article of her wardrobe, to say nothing of the brushing and waving of her very beautiful hair.

Somehow it happened that nothing had been said about this expedition at table (why should such a trifling affair be proclaimed?), and Jedediah had, with a strange lack of politeness, proposed to meet the widow at the ferry, at any hour she should name.

She named eleven o'clock, and when, punctual to her appointment, she arrived, she was surprised to find Jedediah waiting for her there, with a carriage.

"I was not aware that you kept a carriage."

"I never did. I ordered it, with the rest of my follies; but, perhaps, I shall find use for it one of these days, when I get that wife you speak of."

"Oh, undoubtedly!"

Jedediah, who sat on the front seat facing the lady, could not avoid seeing how beautiful she was; how fresh in keeping with the rich interior of the vehicle; how she lighted it all up with her smiles, and gave a fresh charm to everything.

He warmed up wonderfully, said some gallant things, and, when they had crossed, proposed a drive.

"But the children?" said the widow.

"Oh, I forgot! Yes, we might call and see them first. You won't be long, I suppose?"

"Why, the dear little fellows always expect a long visit from me on Saturdays, which is their holiday, but, as I have bought them some sweetmeats, perhaps they'll let me off while they are eating these."

"Hem! Allow me to add something to your store, and then they will give us the more time."

"Thank you. I cannot refuse your kindness, though I must limit my boys to small rations of such luxuries."

They stopped, and Mr. Burr purchased posied after pound of the choicest candies, two lost-cakes, sugared and fruited, and a couple of costly toys.

"We'll buy them off," he said, laughing, as the packages were carried out and placed in the carriage; "we'll buy them off, unless they're a pair of unreasonable little fellows."

"Oh, they'll be in ecstasies!" said the widow, delight beaming from her eyes and cheeks, and looking as if she thought of nothing in the world but her children's happiness.

Simple Jedediah believed it, and admired her all the more. They were not long in driving to the boarding-school, where, having been shown into the parlour, they awaited the children, who had to be sent for from an adjacent play-ground; and the visitors were, meanwhile, entertained by the lady of the principal, a solemn-visaged woman, with a descendant upon the various merits of the two pupils, including their docility and their wonderful progress in learning.

They soon came, rushing breathlessly in, each emulous to get the first kiss, and a pretty pair of curly-headed boys they were, of whom any mother might have been proud.

"My Franky! my Freddy!" exclaimed the widow, hugging and kissing them by turns, without the least apparent regard for her elegant dress, bonnet, ribbons, veil or hair—all of which suffered a little from the precipitate grapple of the darlings.

"He's too young to be away from his mamma," she said, clinging tenderly to the smaller of the two boys while a real, genuine, bright, glistening tear stole down the widow's cheek, subduing the last doubt of her excellence in the mind of Jedediah, and quite completing her conquest.

The call was a short one. The presents were distributed, the room echoed with shouts.

Jedediah petted and praised the children, praised the lady of the house, the school, the weather, everything, and then rose to go.

"They'll let us go, now, I think, Mrs. Bright," he said.

There was a violent protest; but a little coaxing, and a promise to look in again on their return, quelled the mutineers, and mamma was let off.

"They are noble boys," said Mr. Burr, as the carriage rolled off. "The youngest is very beautiful, and he is the image of—of his mother."

"Oh, Mr. Burr!"

"It is so, madam," said Jedediah, who had taken the back seat this time, beside his companion, crowding her ample crinoline a little, but apparently quite unaware of that circumstance.

"I never flatter," he continued, "unless the truth is flattery, and I say little Freddy is the image of his—his beautiful mamma."

The widow blushed deeply now; but she laughed, too, and did not seem painfully embarrassed.

"I declare you will make me quite vain," she said, not knowing what else to say.

"You have a right to be so. Who has a better right?"

"But you know, Mr. Burr, that pride and poverty do not do well together."

"Poverty! I wish you were ten times poorer than you are."

"You cruel man!"

"I wish your children were in rags."

"You monster!"

"Yes, in rags."

"Why? Why? Why?"

"So that I should have the more pleasure in offering you, as I do now, my fortune, my house, my hand!"

"Mr. Burr," exclaimed the widow, half averting her face, and half hiding the real blushes that mantled her cheek, "are you in earnest?"

"Never more so—never half so much so in my life, Mrs. Bright. Will you accept me?"

"With all my heart," said the lady, frankly, extending her hand, for she was too candid to affect a reserve that she did not feel.

The lover took the offered hand and kissed it, or rather he kissed the glove which enveloped it, but he pronounced it unsatisfactory, and at once aspired to the widow's lips, which were not refused him.

"I decided about it on Thursday afternoon," he said, "and I have no doubt we shall be very happy."

"I am sure we shall," said the lady, with one of her brightest smiles, "only—only I fear—"

"Fear! May don't use that word, my—my dear madam."

"That the children—so many of them—"

"Not a bit of it. I wouldn't mind twice as many—such nice ones. Why, they'll be the life of the house."

"You are very, very kind."

"What difference does it make? I've plenty of money, and I begin to think there's as much pleasure in spending it as in making it, almost."

Adversity had done Jedediah good. "He was just finding his heart, which had been covered up for a quarter of a century under a mass of rubbish. He had begun to feel for other people."

Before the drive terminated everything was settled. The wedding was to be put off a few months out of consideration for the feelings of the Holden family, and in the meantime the engagement was to be kept strictly secret, except that the lady was at liberty, if she chose, to divulge it to her daughters.

In pursuance of this plan Jedediah and his blooming fiancée, after another short visit to the children, parted where they had met, whence the widow pursued her way home by stage, pondering over her suddenly changed fortunes.

#### CHAPTER XXIX.

A DAY or two later Mr. Burr, carrying out his new rôle magnificently, brought his beloved Louisa a bank-book, showing a few thousands placed to her credit, and said:

"You'll want a little extra pocket money for preparations, both for yourself and your daughters. You have so frankly told me of your straightened circumstances, before our engagement, that you cannot refuse to accept of this. Use it freely, the more freely the better I shall like it."

The widow acknowledged this generosity with tears, and her admirer saw her in still another phase of her beauty.

"There is the key of our house," he said; "if you will look in some day and see if anything needs alteration I shall feel obliged."

"Oh, I am sure that is unnecessary; but I will go and see it to-day, for I have the greatest curiosity to do so. But is it quite safe to leave a furnished house entirely unoccupied so long?"

"Not quite—no. But there is a private watchman. We must take our chance."

An hour later, after Jedediah had gone, the postman brought a letter for Mrs. B., and one of the daughters eagerly received it from a servant who brought it up to their room.

"Now we shall know about the house," said Henrietta, eagerly. "May I open it, mamma?"

"Oh, yes—certainly."

She tore it open, and after glancing a few moments over it, said:

"Yes, we can have it, at our price, but we must give security for the rent. Can we do that, mamma?"

"Of course we can," replied Nelly. "There's Uncle George—"

"I don't know about Uncle George; besides, who wants to ask him? It isn't so very pleasant a thing to do."

The widow watched the anxious faces of her daughters with a smile.

"There's mamma, serene as usual," said Henrietta. "She has no fears about the security, nor anything else, I believe. What do you think, mamma? Can we get it?"

"Oh, yes; I presume so."

"And how soon can we go? Do let us get away



[MR. BURR IN DANGER.]

before we waste any more money paying these high prices here. Then, perhaps, we may have a little left to get ourselves something respectable. Look at that bonnet! I can't do anything with it. I've been at work upon it all the morning."

"Go and get a new one, Netty, and you also, Nelly," said the mother, handing them her purse.

The girls looked up surprised and incredulous. Netty took the purse, laughing, and said:

"There's nothing in it, I know."

But it was well filled with money, which had been kept ready to pay the semi-monthly board bill, due the next day.

"Mamma! Are you in earnest?"

"Quite so."

"How high may we go?"

"What do the best cost?"

"The best! Oh, it's useless to talk about the best. Such a one as Miss Gobleigh had—oh! what a love it was!—is at least two pounds. But I think we can get them for one, if—that isn't too much."

"Get bonnets like the Gobleigh's, my dears, by all means," said the widow, laughing, as, taking back the purse, she handed them a ten-pound note, out of it, "and go to Stewart's while you are out and look at some silks and poplins for dresses. To-morrow I will go with you and buy them."

The half-crazed girls threw their arms about their mother's neck and kissed her, and then hastily made themselves ready to go out, yet not without ceasing to exclaim and wonder.

"We'll astonish the country people," said Nelly; "won't we, Netty?"

"Not more than we are astonished ourselves," said Netty, laughing. "I am sure mamma must have drawn a prize in a lottery."

The bonnets were bought after many exciting discussions and much running to and from the milliner's, but they were of course taken back for some alterations of the flowers to suit the complexion of the wearers. So much time was consumed in these negotiations that the shopping for dresses was postponed until the next day, and in the afternoon, when the excitement of the young ladies had slightly subsided, their mother proposed a walk, to which they gladly agreed.

"We can afford to look shabby to-day," said Nelly, "since we are to appear smart soon."

Yet they were by no means shabby.

They were respectable, and all the finery in the world would not have added so much to their beauty as did the smiles and cheerful looks which now lit up their countenances.

They walked, it being a pleasant afternoon. The

street was gay with promenaders, as well as with carriages of various descriptions rolling past them, and flashing back the sunlight from their glittering wheels and silver-mounted harnesses.

London had never looked so beautiful to the sisters as now, when they expected so soon to leave it, and a feeling of dejection came over them at the thought of their new home.

"It will be dismal enough in the country, of course," said Nelly; "but—but we won't complain," she added, catching a reproachful glance from her mother.

"We will do the best we can."

"Can you guess where I am going this afternoon?" asked the widow, looking at the numbers on the doors.

"Oh, to call on Mrs. —"

"No, to call on nobody. I am going to look at Mr. Burr's house, which we have heard so much about. He gave me the key this morning, and said I could go all through it if I wished. They say it is splendidly furnished."

The girls were in high glee at this prospect. "Poor man!" said Henrietta. "He don't look as if his money made him very happy."

"Oh, he has been as merry as a cricket the last few days," the younger sister replied. "But I wish he wouldn't touch me under the chin as if I were a child."

"Henrietta, you must learn to use more respectful language," said the widow, severely. "Poor man" is not a proper phrase to apply to Mr. Burr."

"Oh, mamma, I am sure I heard you speak of him in those very words only a few days ago."

"Did I?" said the mother, laughing. "Well, we'll both learn to be more polite, then."

They found the house, and not without some hesitation decided to go in.

"It will look so strange," said Nelly.

"But there is no one here who knows us. Come on," replied the mother.

They entered, and, having looked themselves in, commenced a survey of the premises.

Everything was perfect. Nothing could be handsomer nor in better taste than the furniture. The rich carpets, the immense mirrors, the lace and damask curtains, the elegantly carved rosewood chairs, sofas and piano, and countless minor articles, by turns elicited the admiration of the ladies as they wandered through the large parlours, under lofty ceilings and great far-branching chandeliers.

Throughout the house all was in keeping, and when all had been explored and admired the party returned to the parlour, where Nelly threw herself into a large chair and said:

"I'm sorry we've seen it, after all. It will make our own home look so mean and insignificant."

"Oh dear, oh dear! Why couldn't we have been rich?" added Netty; "or at least not so very poor?"

"Mamma doesn't look the least envious," resumed the elder sister. "She seems to enjoy all as much as if it were her own."

"Would you like to live here?" the mother asked, calmly.

"Would you like to have lived in the Garden of Eden?" said Nelly.

"Because, if you would," continued the widow, "we will do so about Christmas."

"Oh, we had better stay now, as we are already in possession."

"But really, Nelly, I am quite in earnest."

There was something in Mrs. Bright's eye, as well as in the tone of her voice, which arrested the jocose reply of her daughter, and sent a strange thrill through her frame.

"If you and Netty do not object to a new papa," added the widow, making the avowal with an effort, even before her own daughters, and blushing deeply as she did so.

The scene which ensued could not easily be described.

The transport of the girls was unbounded, and for many minutes they were almost incoherent in their ejaculations, and in the questions with which they rapidly plied their mother, who could get no chance to answer them, nor scarcely to breathe, under their kisses and caresses.

"That is the secret of the new bonnets and dresses, of course?"

"And we shan't want that house?"

"Nor have to give security."

"I thought it was strange you should come here."

"How rich he is!"

"Do you really like him?"

"What shall we have to call him?"

"I hope he is not cross."

"I wish we could have the house and money without him."

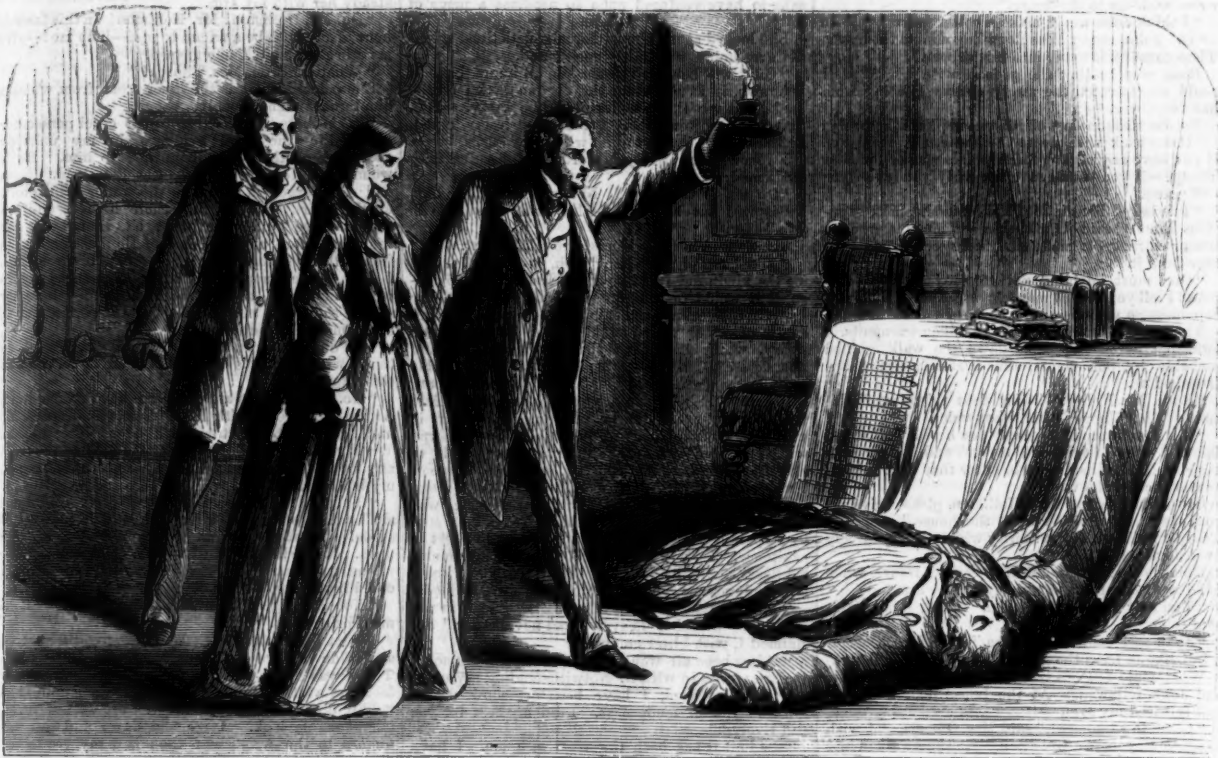
"Netty, you impertinent girl! How often shall I have to warn you to put a check on your tongue?"

"I am dumb, mamma."

Such was a part of the conversation which followed this disclosure.

The excitement ran high for the rest of the day, and in the evening the widow informed Mr. Burr that she had let her daughters into the secret, but that it would be allowed to spread no farther.





[THE END OF GASPARD'S CRIME.]

## THE FIRST SMILE. A Christmas Story.

### CHAPTER XI.

I know 'tis woman's struggling pride  
That's surging in thy heart;  
But throw the flimsy veil aside  
And choose the better part.

LEAPING from my chair, I went to the window. "It is nothing," said Mrs. Thorpe; "absolutely nothing. But I was terribly frightened. One of the servants looked in from the outside."

But she arose as she spoke, and walked with faltering steps towards the door.

"I think I will go upstairs. Don't stay here in this dismal room. How stupid it was in me to forbid its being lighted. Good night."

And she went upstairs. But I saw how her hand grasped the carved balustrade all the way, and I watched her safely to the top, fearing another fainting fit. Then I proceeded to call John Marvin, who was down in the servants' room. There was a little delay about it and it took us several minutes to put on slouched hats and capes, which, in the evening dimness, might give the appearance of a woman. Then we walked quietly downstairs, out into the night. We had both of us pistols, and were decided upon one thing, to hunt down Gaspard if he were anywhere in the vicinity.

Treading as softly as might be, we separated, John taking the ground at the left, which had little patches of shrubbery off behind the stables, and I hurrying into the garden, whose pretty arbours would offer comfortable and unobserved retreat.

In the very centre path I stumbled upon a hurrying, panting figure, and seized it with resolute hands.

"Let go of me, or I will stab you!" came, in a fierce voice, through clenched teeth.

"Why, Rona, pretty Rona, is it you?" exclaimed I, in unbounded astonishment. "And I thought I had caught a thief!"

"Mr. Holliston!" ejaculated she, and, turning her head with a quick gesture of alarm, she seemed to listen a moment; then added, with a resumption of her natural tone, "how you frightened me! What are you doing here?"

"I came to look after someone who frightened Mrs. Thorpe."

"Oh, were you there? She told me about it. Ross had better be careful how he indulges his curiosity. It was only one of the stable boys. So

you are spared the chivalrous pursuit, and may return tranquilly, Mr. Holliston."

"Why such haste, pretty Rona? Let us have a little chat. The air is so cool and refreshing, and this starlight is so romantic."

"I cannot delay. I must go back and assure my mistress that it was really Ross. I told her I was sure of it, but she wanted me to come and see. She is always timid when Mr. Thorpe is away."

"Well, good night, then. I will finish a cigar in one of the garden arbours."

"And take a serious cold. I cannot tell why men will be so stupid," said she, pettishly. "Don't you feel how chilly the dew is?"

"I like it. Besides, I am warmly dressed. But don't stay yourself, if you are afraid. Shall I escort you to the house?"

"I have almost a mind to stay," said she, coquettishly, after a moment's irresolution. "I have been wanting to ask you a few questions about Mr. Marvin. Does he keep a string of compliments constantly on hand? He has a new and pretty one every time I see him."

"Marvin is warmly interested in you, Rona; and no wonder. I think he scarcely thinks of anyone else in the house."

"Is he thrifty, and always steady? I'll not listen to any man who makes a brute of himself through intoxication—who will beat me and rob me."

"He is a pattern of sobriety. When he asks you to become his wife you may safely consent."

She did not detect the pleasant irony of my tone, but stood looking down upon the ground, working her foot into the gravel.

"This is a pleasant home. One should well consider before leaving it."

"True. I never knew a more lovely family, or visited at so charming a spot," answered I.

"I hope you don't include Mrs. Dodge," she said, with a bitter laugh. "If there be anything lovely about her, I have yet to see it."

"I scarcely know the woman. I don't think I have spoken twice to her since I came."

"The more lucky for you. I know her, and hate her. But she is even with me there. She would like to turn me out of the house; but my lady can't do it. She must turn the mistress away first." And again she laughed exultantly.

"You are right there, Rona. Your mistress is certainly very fond of you. But don't be too positive. Ladies are sometimes capricious, and it may be your turn to fall from favour."

Rona tossed her head.

"I am not afraid of it. I can stay with Mrs. Thorpe

as long as I like, and have pretty much my own way as well. Hark! What is that?"

I knew what it was. It was John's low whistle to announce his vicinity. I gave another in answer, while I said:

"It was a whistle, wasn't it, something like this? I shouldn't wonder if John was searching around the garden."

"Do call him in. Come up to the veranda, and I'll tell you a queer story I heard the other day."

"Nay. Come, rather, to the arbour. I shall smoke my cigar there."

She followed reluctantly, as I led the way, purposely uncertain in my movements with regard to the choice of arbours.

At the first I perceived she was more than willing, anxious to pause; so I kept on.

Angry and disconcerted, yet not daring to show it, she followed me. At the next she was equally desirous of stopping, but I pushed forward towards a side retreat, a sort of trolleed summer-house built against the high wall which separated the stable grounds from the garden.

It was in the shade of a magnificent locust tree, hung thickly with creepers, and we could see the glistening dew on the leaves.

"Oh, how damp! We shall catch our deaths there. I am not going into it, Mr. Holliston!" exclaimed she, rather louder than was actually necessary, it seemed to me; and I queried if the words were not to warn someone else rather than for my benefit.

"Not going? Good night then, pretty Rona, for I must certainly smoke my cigar in that arbour."

She caught my arm, and clung to it.

"No, no. You shall not go in there."

"Why not, silly girl?"

"Oh, it looks so dark and gloomy, so—so ghost-like. You must not go. I am frightened. See how I tremble. Come with me to the house, I beg of you."

"Why, I gave you credit for better courage. I will call John to accompany you," answered I, my spirits rising with the prospect of success; and I gave the concerted signal, three sharp, quick whistles.

I could hear John running along over the walks, and I heard likewise a low, stealthy rustle from within the arbour.

"Nay, pretty Rona, there is no need of alarm. Don't you see I have a loaded pistol? Supposing the arbour had its tenant, its wretched, skulking, miserable tenant, a single click of this revolver, and he is powerless to harm. Wait a minute, and I will explore."

"I hate you!" exclaimed Rona passionately, striking at me with her hand, and then bursting into tears.

"If you had any mercy in your nature, you would come with me to the house."

"I think John would make a better gallant. Here he is. John, escort Miss Rona Zagonini to the house. Then come back to me into this arbour."

Rona was beating the ground with her foot. I could almost catch the angry sparks glinting from her fiery eyes.

But she made one last effort, and implored, hoarsely:

"Come back with me to the house, Mr. Holliston. If you have any regard for Mrs. Thorpe, or for Miss Thorpe—if you would save the lady you love—you will come."

"The lady I love, indeed! Who is she, most sagacious Rona?" said I, taking a few steps nearer the arbour entrance, to make sure there could be no escape from it.

"One must be blind not to see," retorted she. "And I tell you, it will make or mar Evelyn Thorpe's happiness as you obey me now."

There was a sudden rustle of silken garments, a light but hasty step came down the walk, guided probably by our voices, and a stately figure approached us.

"Rona, Mr. Holliston! what does this mean?" demanded Mrs. Thorpe's imperious voice.

"Oh, Mrs. Thorpe, how came you here?" exclaimed Rona. "I got frightened myself, and I have been begging Mr. Holliston not to enter that dark arbour, but he declares he will."

"It is very damp. Mr. Holliston, please give me your arm, and assist me to the house," said Mrs. Thorpe, with a quiet authority which could scarcely be resisted.

I bit my lip in rage, but how could I refuse, when her jewelled hand was already on my arm?

"You may wait for me, John," said I, in a significant tone.

"John will come with Rona," said Mrs. Thorpe.

"I dislike to have the garden made a public resort."

What could I say to that? I walked along sulkily, and John followed. At the house door I bowed, and released my arm.

"Come in a moment," said Mrs. Thorpe. "I wish to speak to you, Mr. Holliston." And she walked into the room nearest at hand.

Rona and the rest of us followed. The girl, in obedience to her mistress's gesture, turned up the gas until the apartment was one flood of brilliance. It showed me Mrs. Thorpe's face marbly white, and more perfect than any statue.

"John," said she, "go up to your master's room, and leave off roaming around in my private gardens. Rona, leave the room."

She waited until the pair had obeyed her injunction, then turned again to me. How coldly white she looked! And those magnificent eyes—what a depth of splendour beyond any diamond ray shone within them!

"Mr. Holliston," said she, "what was the object of your visit here?"

"To ferret out the thief who has been despoiling your husband," answered I, bluntly.

There was no fluctuation of the cold, set face.

"Have you succeeded?"

"I might, if you had not ordered me away from the thief's retreat," answered I, indignantly. "Gaspard was there, I know."

"And is the discovery of this robber your sole reason for spying around this house, for following this Gaspard?"

"It is," I answered, haughtily. "The task your husband allotted me I have endeavoured to execute faithfully."

She drew one long breath which was like a shudder.

"Well, then you need search no longer. You have found the thief."

"Aye! but I have lost him also, madam. I am not so stupid that I do not know what sort of work it was you set Rona upon. Gaspard is safely out of the arbour by this time," retorted I.

"I said you had found the thief, Mr. Holliston. She stands before you. Gaspard is but the poor tool. It is I—Winthrop Thorpe's wife—who has taken his money. Now, what will you do with me?"

I stood looking at her in amazement, deeply embarrassed, likewise, at this abrupt *dénouement*.

"I await your answer, sir. What can you—what can the law do with me?"

"Nothing, madam; nothing whatever," stammered I. "But your husband—"

"Yes, my husband!" she cried, with a sharp tone of anguish breaking up her calmness. "He ought to be more, and beyond the law for me. And so he is! so he is! Well, I don't wonder you stare at me in amazement. What folly in me to withdraw my confidence from one so generously tender and compassionate! You know, and so do I, that no matter how much I have taken, I could have had it all for the asking. Oh, what folly! what madness! You

think I must have loved sin and deceit for its own sake to have ventured upon so needless a piece of folly."

She looked at me almost fiercely, with those splendid eyes holding me fairly spellbound.

"Guilt will be discovered. We all know that. It is known, is it not, about the cheque drawn at the bank? It was that which called him away. Well, that was my work, too. I confess it freely to you. I shall confess it also to him when he returns."

I remembered Evelyn's words, and involuntarily exclaimed:

"Oh no, Mrs. Thorpe. Never confess it to him, for it will kill him to lose his faith and pride in you."

She clasped her two hands across her heart.

"You have pity for him? Oh, heaven bless you for the kindness! And so do I. If I could help it—oh, if it would only be sparing him!—how quickly I would rush away, and fling myself into the first depth of water which would take from me this weary, weary life! But that would only wound him deeper. He loves me so—that proud, noble heart loves me so—that I could see no way to spare him, except by hiding from him my sore misery. And now that can no longer be. Listen. Your part is ended. You know very well that Winthrop Thorpe will silence this whole affair; that I have only to confess to him a woman's foolish weakness, a love of finery, extravagance—any excuse will answer. I can tell him that, having brought him so little down, I was ashamed to tell of my debts; that I was led out step by step, in a fatal way, but now I fall at his feet in penitence. He will forgive me. He will take me to his heart again, he loves me so. I told you I know how he loves me. I say again, your part is ended."

"You are right. I will take my departure in the morning. Would to heaven I had never come," exclaimed I, with bitter emphasis.

"It has been all trouble and misery. I am sorry you are woven in with it. Notwithstanding my anger at your deception, I have been somehow drawn towards you in tenderness. I did my best for you and Evelyn."

"I admit it has been the same with me. I have fought off any suspicion of your conspiracy in the case. I have admired you greatly. I cannot bear to think now that you must endure any humiliation," returned I.

The first smile stirring her cold lips, she held out her hand.

"Thank you. But for this we might have been true and sincere friends. As it is I suppose we must walk in separate paths; unless, indeed, you marry Evelyn. I need not assure you I will do everything in my power to soften her brother's resentment and opposition, though I have little hope for you—I say it frankly—because of his pride, his terrible Thorpe pride. But for that he would be a perfect character. But we are none of us perfect, for none are wholly happy."

We shook hands, with tender, lingering pressure, not at all like foes, but rather in the most friendly way.

"I suppose I am to say nothing?" said I.

"I should prefer not. Let me have the little advantage of speaking before I am compelled to explanation. I promise you it shall be done at the first moment of his arrival."

I bowed silently and turned towards the door. It cost me something to go away knowing that Gaspard was somewhere in those gardens, but I walked gravely upstairs to my chamber.

## CHAPTER XII.

Oh, love, oh, love! when we listen to you,  
To prudence we bid an eternal adieu.

I TOSSED and tossed upon my restless pillow all the early portion of the night; some time after midnight I fell sound asleep. But I sprang up, and was on my feet in a moment, when a suppressed voice at my door called my name:

"Mr. Holliston! Mr. Holliston! For heaven's sake, come here a moment!"

My clothes were lying on a chair at the head of the bed. I dressed myself, my heart beating suffocatingly, for I was certain that I recognized the tone, and it was full of horror.

A slender figure was outside, leaning against the doorway.

Its cold hand seized mine, and drew me forward, across the hall, into a room I had never seen opened before.

It flashed upon me where I was, even before I glanced around me. They were the sacredly closed apartments which had belonged to the last Mrs. Thorpe.

It was Winthrop Thorpe's wife who faced me with great, open eyes, dilated with horror. She leaned

against my shoulder, trembling so that I was fain to steady her with my arm.

"Oh, Mr. Holliston! Mr. Holliston! In this terrible hour of my trial be a friend to me!—help me!—give me a brother's aid!" she gasped.

"What can I do, Mrs. Thorpe?"

She pointed towards the inner room, from which a dim light streamed feebly.

"He is there, Mr. Holliston—the cruel persecutor of my life—the fatal evidence of my unhappy doom. Something has happened to him. He is wounded. He is lying at the threshold. Rona and I dragged him over the outer threshold, up the stairs, thus far, and there he fell, and we cannot move him. He must be brought inside the door before anyone comes. He must be hidden from all eyes before morning. My brain swims. I had some enough to know that these rooms were unvisited, that he might be hidden here for a little time; but now I can think and plan no more, and Rona is like one bewildered."

"Sit down," said I. "Dear Mrs. Thorpe, trust me that I will do what is best. There are no servants in this wing?"

"No. Only Rona and Armand have rooms here. Armand has gone with his master. If there be no unusual disturbance, there will be no interruption. We have taught the housekeeper to understand that any movement here is caused by Rona attending to my indisposition."

"Then have no fear. I will call John, and Rona shall come to look after you. We will manage it alone. But stay. We must have a bed to lay him upon. I have heard from Evelyn the history of these rooms, and I could almost see that villain die before I could lay him on her bed."

"You are right," she said, shuddering. "Rona must bring her."

I went back for John. We came together softly, and made our way cautiously into the inner room. There was Rona, upright as a statue, and at her feet was a stifled length. I took the candle, and held it down to the face. It was set with a frozen, unmistakable look. I reached down and put my fingers to the wrist, and then laid my ear to the crimson-clotted breast.

"Finis is written to his crimes on earth," said I, solemnly.

Rona gave a low, hollow groan.

"Dead! Dead!" ejaculated she. "Oh, Gaspard, Gaspard! I dare not rejoice as I thought I should." And then she fell again into silence, her head dropping low upon her breast. I went to Mrs. Thorpe, who sat just as I left her.

"You will no longer be frightened by his threats, whatever they are, nor persecuted by his demands for money, Mrs. Thorpe. Gaspard is dead."

She flung herself down upon her knees.

"Oh, Father, Father in heaven! Dost Thou indeed offer me this respite? Oh, hear me vow to walk pure and holy henceforward!" cried she, and then she commenced weeping.

"But, Mrs. Thorpe," said I, touching her shoulder gently, "something must still be done. The man's corpse must not be found here, blood-stained and gory. I happen to know that the police are sharply on his track. It will have an ugly look for him to be found here."

"We did not harm him. You do not think we killed him?" she said, quickly.

"No, oh no. I was aware he had been wounded. A detective following him fired to prevent his escape. He probably has been hiding and creeping on with an undressed wound, and has died from loss of blood. But he must be carried out of this house."

"What were they following him for?" asked she, in a hoarse whisper.

"For murder, they told me. I do not know all the particulars. He is at a higher tribunal now."

"And I am free at last," murmured she, and sat down again like one dizzy.

Rona came out, and, kneeling down, put her head into the lady's lap, like a tired child.

"Oh, Genie, Genie!" said she, "Gaspard is dead!"

"And you can put aside all your wild hate now, Rona. He is beyond the fulfillment of his threats. We are safe at last. Think of that, Rona, and forget your anger."

"I do, I do. I try to remember that I loved him once; that I was his wife in those old dark days, and I shudder at the fate he has met."

"But something must be done. Supposing that we carry him back to the arbour, and leave him there? It might look as if, in wandering from pursuit at dead of night, he found that shelter and died there undiscovered," continued I.

"Any way, I can trust to your goodness. I know you will decide wisely and in kindness to me," replied she, wearily.

And so John Marvin and I carried downstairs the ghastly burden, feeling our way through the dimness.



and treading warily, although the rich thickness of carpet dulled all sounds.

As we came back I struck a wax taper and examined the stairs, relieved to find that there were no traces of blood, such as John had washed from the great stone step at the rear of the hall. But on the carpet, within the closed rooms, there was a pool, the last drops of his life.

I found Mrs. Thorpe and Rona clinging to each other in silence, and with some difficulty made them aware of the necessity for hiding the terrible stain.

"I cannot! Oh, I cannot!" exclaimed Rona, shuddering from head to foot. "Don't ask me, I implore of you. All my courage and strength have gone away from me. I am troubled by a terrible fear. He said, when I saw him in the evening, if I did not help him, he would haunt my steps whether he lived or died."

"I will do it," said John Marvin, "if you will bring the towels."

Rona brought towels from her own room, and put them in his hand; then retreated again to her mistress, and nestled close beside her. At my suggestion, they both went to Mrs. Thorpe's own room, and presently John and I came out and locked the door behind us. I took the key into Mrs. Thorpe's dressing-room, and uttered her name softly. She came promptly.

"Here is the key," I said, still whispering, as we had done in the other rooms. "I think all things are secure. John will go down and examine the moment day breaks, and remove any stains we may have overlooked. I need not, I hope, assure you that you may rely upon my profound secrecy."

She put her hand in mine.

"You are too good. I cannot thank you, because thanks are such feeble return for all you have done. You shall have a full explanation some time or other, even though it may only be left, a written confession for your eye alone. And then you will rejoice that you lent your assistance upon this terrible night to one in such a woeful strait."

I wrung her hand, filled with profound pity, and a vague, mysterious tenderness; then returned to my room, scarcely, however, to sleep. The remembrance of that cold figure, lying out in the chill and damp, was enough to drive away slumber from my pillow, and when I recalled his mysterious connection with the two trembling women I did not so much marvel at Rona's dread.

I went down to breakfast with rather heavy eyes. Evelyn, fair, sweet, and fresh as ever, glanced into my face, and then whispered:

"You must not allow this to trouble you so much, Hugh. Winthrop's perversity has no power in another year, when I shall be of age."

It was the first time she had ever addressed me by my Christian name.

I cannot exactly tell why it touched me so deeply, but my eyes flamed over with a soft dew, and my voice trembled, as I returned:

"You are an angel of goodness, Evelyn. If only I can be good enough to deserve to win you!"

She smiled brightly, a soft flush on her cheek, her eyes like stars, only they were clear and lucid as a woodland spring.

Thank heaven! there were no mysteries, nor concealments, nor dark tragedies woven in with her pure life.

She had always possessed a singular charm for me, but I had never felt it so forcibly as now.

Mrs. Thorpe sent down her excuses, not by Rona, but by one of the chamber-maids. She had passed a very wakeful night, and would try and sleep a little in the morning.

They might send up some coffee at eleven o'clock, for herself and Rona.

"I heard them talking, I think," said Evelyn; "and I should have gone to see if Imogene were ill, only it annoys her to have me come."

I mentally uttered a thanksgiving that she had remained in her chamber, thus being spared the consciousness of the impending discovery.

And we sat down to breakfast alone, as, indeed, we had often done before. Mrs. Dodge presided at the coffee-urn in prim dignity. I think she had received a gentle hint from her master, for she remained in her place all the while. Evelyn was quite conscious of her guardianship, but it only provoked her to merriment.

And she was dimpling over in smiles, and now and then rippling forth into laughter, throughout the breakfast time.

"You hinted that you were going away to-day. I hope that you have reconsidered it," said she, as I followed her into the hall.

"I shall wait for Mr. Thorpe's return."

"How grave you are!" said she, glancing furtively into my face. "Is it so terrible a thing to meet a brother's foolish anger, when—when—the sister is not angry at all?"

"Dear, sweet girl! I ought, indeed, to wear only the most joyous face, who have been so honoured by your kindness. But I have been rather sorely tried. Some day I will explain."

"Winthrop shall hear how indignant I am with him. I will no longer hesitate, from foolish delicacy, to confess how earnest and warm is my regard for you," said she, impetuously.

Even as she spoke the outer door swung open, and Mr. Thorpe, followed by Armand with a stranger, entered. He flung open the anteroom door, and showed the guest into it before I had an opportunity to see the latter's face; for we were standing in our favourite corner by the door. Then he came out towards us, frowning darkly upon me.

"What! so soon returned, Winthrop?" said Evelyn, calmly. "You must have left town early."

"Not too soon, it seems. Mr. Holliston, I will thank you for your attendance in the library presently. I have found a body of police hunting over my premises, tracking—by his blood, they say—an escaped murderer. The gentleman in the anteroom has come in to explain to me the circumstances of the case. Have any of you seen a stranger around?"

"A murderer!" cried out Evelyn, the colour fading out of her cheek.

At that moment there was a loud shout without, and in a few seconds of time we saw the garden thronged with policemen.

"What have they found?" exclaimed Mr. Thorpe, his exclusiveness shocked at this disturbance of his privacy.

Armand and the stranger had heard the outcry, and the uproar of the swelling voices. They both came hurrying out. I felt my heart bound as I saw the latter's face plainly. It was Mr. Adam Sharpe. The recognition was mutual.

"You here? All right. Things are progressing splendidly. I sent a letter to your place this morning. We've got that fellow in a trap this time, I think," he said, as he hurried by me. But when he came in sight of the harbour, and beheld the stirless figure there, his face turned pale with baffled rage.

"Dead! dead!" he muttered. "Then I shall get but half the reward, and he has escaped the gallows."

"What does it matter?" answered I, impatiently. "Good heavens! man, do not look at this thing in a mercenary light. That man has done with guilt and crime. He has gone to the Judge of all. Let us leave the rest alone. Then the rights are all established, and I am Lionel Lenterne's son?"

"Exactly. I presented the facts, and obtained security for payment of the reward upon your appearance."

I could not talk any more with him then. My heart was too full, my brain too dizzy. I walked a little away from them, and only returned upon the appearance of the coroner, who had been summoned to the spot. The verdict was what I had anticipated it would be. As it was repeated from mouth to mouth, I glanced up at the house, and saw, at an open window, two grave, pale faces; but the palest and graviest belonged to Rona, instead of her mistress.

A look of intense relief came over Mr. Thorpe's face as the body was borne away, and the last of the police took his way from the garden. Mr. Sharpe still lingered, however. I saw his restless eye, his nervous manner, and guessed the programme was not yet clear for him. I asked him for my mother's letters. He told me they were safely in possession of the agent in whose hands the Lenterne estate had been lying; that in a week, at the farthest, I must present myself there as the legal claimant, and he himself would accompany me. I thanked him briefly, and wished him to go. But he still remained, and presently asked:

"Who is this Mr. Thorpe? Is he a particular friend of yours?"

"On the contrary, he is very cool to me just now. He has insulted me," answered I, stung by the remembrance of the angry, withering glance Mr. Thorpe had cast upon me when he entered the hall and found me standing by his sister's side.

"Good!" ejaculated Sharpe, rubbing his hands briskly. "He thought you were poor and obscure, I suppose. Pay him off, pay him off! Extraordinary chance, extraordinary!"

"At least, I shall take a little revenge. I shall present myself in another character now."

"And about that promise?" continued Sharpe, skipping over his words, as if he did not care for me to dwell much upon them. "You will give me your word of honour to sell that house to me?"

"If I sell a house at all," answered I, hastily, anxious to be rid of him.

He walked away chuckling, and went into the house, to take leave, I supposed, of Mr. Thorpe. As I had been requested to meet the latter in the library,

as soon as I had attended to a few trifles about my toilet I left my chamber to descend. Mrs. Thorpe's door opened softly, and that lady came out, for a moment, with extended hand.

"Let me thank you once more," she said. "It was well and thoughtfully planned."

"You heard the verdict then?"

"Yes, we both heard it—Rona and I. Mr. Holliston, I do not know but I shall need farther help from you. Rona is very strange. I never dreamed so fiery a spirit as hers could be broken down so thoroughly. She is shuddering and trembling all the while. That speech of Gaspard's haunts her. She thinks his ghost is near, if only a curtain rustles in the breeze; and she dares not quit my side for a single moment. She is asleep now. I gave her an opiate, and it has just conquered her restlessness."

"My services are ever at your command, even though I leave the place. It seems to me that the worst is over."

"I think so, too. I am half frightened at the glad relief in my heart. Oh, such a heavy burden seems taken away from me; and there is such a light, buoyant exhilaration in my spirits, that, as I before said, I am half afraid it is only the omen of fresh disaster."

"Let us hope not. Have you seen Mr. Thorpe yet?"

"Only for a moment. He ran up to the chamber door, and gave me his usual tender greeting, and then he was called down. Some strange gentleman asked to see him, Armand said. I have no fear but he will forgive me freely. Besides, I have most of that money obtained at the bank untouched. I have no fear."

How her eyes shone, and what a glad, hopeful smile broke over her face? Was it indeed the omen?

(To be continued)

## SCIENCE.

**MOULDY SUBSTANCES IN ROOMS.**—It has long been known that the presence of moulds in rooms is highly injurious to human health; under certain conditions of dampness and bad ventilation it is no uncommon thing to see mildew run all over a large expanse of whitewashed wall or ceiling. If this mould occur in a living-room, and it be not destroyed, it frequently brings on a complication of painful symptoms in the human patient, or, in other words, the membranes and tissues of the body are known to offer a fitting habitat for the plant, and it is transferred from the original objects to the human frame. A weak solution of hypochlorite of lime has recently been recommended as a destroyer of moulds in rooms, and as their growth is both common and rapid in this country in damp and ill-ventilated situations the remedy is worth a trial.—S.

**CONCRETE BUILDINGS.**—An operative bricklayer, who has "reported" upon what he saw during an excursion to Paris, refers to the concrete houses (they are not many) being built there. In some cases the walls are built by first running up parallel rows of deal boarding at a distance apart answering to the intended thickness of the wall, and of a height of 5 ft. or 6 ft. The concrete is then shovelled in between these boards and allowed to set, after which the boarding is carried up higher, and more concrete added, until the whole of the walls is complete. The door-frames and window-frames are fixed in their proper places as the work proceeds. Such walls naturally have a very rough appearance, and some of them in the Emperor's model concrete-built dwellings are being coated with plaster of paris 1½ in. thick, smoothed and coursed to imitate stone. In some other cases, concrete blocks are made in wooden moulds, greased within, and these blocks are employed as stone. The writer adds the remark that "the French builders do not approve the concrete system of building."

**NEW THAMES TUNNEL.**—An engineering project, for which the necessary Parliamentary sanction has not yet been obtained, is in contemplation, namely, a tunnel or subway intended to be driven under the Thames between London Bridge and the Tower. The present project has the sanction of the Tower authorities, and arrangements for the Surrey side approach have been already made. The old tunnel is about 1,250 ft. between the shafts. The proposed subway will be about 1,320 ft. The one cost above 450,000l.; the other is estimated to cost the comparatively trifling of 16,000l. Mr. Peter Barlow, F.R.S., who is the engineer of this project, proposes that the descent and ascent to the tunnel shall be by hydraulic lifts, similar to those in use in the large new hotels, and that the passengers shall be conveyed from one shaft to the other in light steel omnibuses of perfect

workmanship, and driven by manual power upon a system of accumulating force. The friction will, it is expected, be so much reduced by the exactitude of the fitting and the excellence of the materials and workmanship employed, as to make the power of one man amply sufficient for working an omnibus. The bottoms of the shafts will be on the same level, and the subway will dip in the centre, to give speed and to accumulate force for the last half of the journey. Mr. Barlow recommends his scheme as applicable to the relief of the crowded streets. He gives full particulars of it in a pamphlet privately circulated, "On the Relief of London Street Traffic."

### REAL TROUBLES.

THE Widow Spencer was perfectly ready to keep Christmas in her cozy little farmhouse. There was a huge turkey flat on his back in the brick oven, and there were cranberry tarts, golden-tinted pumpkin pies, and chicken pasties to bear him company; the biggest red apples were polished until they shone like magnificent carbuncles, the juiciest nuts were cracked, and the best china—white, with a red rose-bud painted in the centre of each piece—was brought out, ready for use.

It was a snug little domicile, with low, mossy eaves reaching nearly to the ground, and a little porch all in a tangle with leafless woodbine, and a large tree spreading its protecting arms over the whole roof, and raining down its golden leaves in jewelled showers when the October blasts were revelling in its giants limbs. And there was an old-fashioned well behind the house, with a huge bucket, whose dripping coolness made you thirsty only to look at it, and a fragrant barn standing a little way back behind a sentinel row of apple trees. Altogether, it was just such a homestead as you would find where you would imagine perfect peace and rest to be found.

The widow sat before the fire in her snuff-coloured bombazine, with its cape and frill, solemnly watching the red flame dart in and out among the great logs on the hearth.

"For I do despise your new-fangled stoves to sit by!" said the widow, with great emphasis.

Susan, her eldest child, a fair-haired girl about twenty, with soft, brown eyes, and a complexion in which the roses came and went at every breath, was arranging some gorgeous white and crimson chrysanthemums in a handleless pitcher, so that the starry flowers and drooping foliage should conceal the inartistic chalice.

Susan was servant at Farmer Wyllis's, just across the river, and "earning her two shillings a week," said the widow, triumphantly, "with the best on 'em."

Charles was home for Christmas, too—home from his clerkship, where he had lost the red and brown of his rustic complexion, and gained that indescribable, off-hand air of ease that the widow marvelled at, but could not explain. And even little Tom, who was errand-boy at Mr. Parker's shop at a shilling a week and his board, was prying surreptitiously into the oven when his mother's back was turned, and looking joyfully at the dish of raisins on the top shelf of the pantry.

"I wish Christmas came every day," said Tom, who had a weakness for good things to eat and drink.

"Well, children," groaned the widow, plaintively, "it's a real pleasure to have you all at home, I do say; but, then, to-morrow you've all got to go away again, and that spoils the whole enjoyment. Oh, dear, dear! life is a string of troubles, the best you can make of it!"

"Mother grumbles as much as ever," whispered Tom to his elder brother.

"Come, children, get ready for church," said Mrs. Spencer, still in the same mournful, minor key; "I'll have dinner on the table by the time you get back; and mind you remember the text and what the minister said."

"But, mother," said Susan, softly, "before I go to church I wanted to tell you something that—"

"I know what it is," groaned the widow, with up-lifted hands and despairing eyes. "Farmer Wyllis is goin' to discharge ye, and you'll be home doing nothing all the winter. It's the Spencer luck exactly! No need to tell me!"

Susan stood abashed, but she did not venture upon a reply.

"I had a piece of news for you, too, mother," said Charles; "but if you speak to Sue so unceremoniously, I'll keep it until after dinner."

Mrs. Spencer shook her head.

"I've all my life been a poor, unfortunate woman, that ill-luck chased from pillar to post. Here I am, a poor, miserable widow, with three children all away from me, and rheumatism settlin' in the left

shoulder, and the old roof leaking. There ain't nobody so bad off as I am."

And the widow subsided into tears and a silk pocket-handkerchief.

"Now, mother, that's nonsense," said cheerful Charles; "because—"

"Oh, yes—nonsense! that's nice, respectful talk to your poor old mother," sobbed Mrs. Spencer. "It's all I ought to expect, though; it's just like all the rest. I almost wish I was dead and buried sometimes!"

Susan began to cry. Charles looked unhappy and discomfited. Tom seized the opportunity to abstract the biggest red apple from the plate on the mantelpiece, and deposit it, with an air of utmost unconsciousness, into his pocket, where it bulged out like an enormous tumour.

"Sue, you're foolish," said Tom, sharply. "Get your things and let's go to church—anyhow," he added, in an undertone. "Don't you mind it, Sue—it's only her way."

So the three children arrayed themselves in their simple best, and set out to walk the two miles and a half of frosty country road that lay between them and the village church—a peaceful stretch of sylvan solitude, with hedges skirting the way.

"Oh, Charles," said Susan, wistfully, "if we could only persuade mother to take a bright view of life."

"I think she grows worse and worse," said Charles, thoughtfully. "She is almost morbid. I wish we could think of any way to cheer her up a little."

"I know a plan," said Tom, planting his white teeth in the crimson side of his apple.

"What is it?"

"Why, when first I went to Mr. Parker's shop I had great hankering after—"

"Thomas," said Susan, gravely, "what language!"

"After raisins, and sugar, and such; so one day Mr. Parker just made me sit down and eat away at them from morning till night. I never wanted to set eyes on them again."

"A very interesting piece of personal history," said Charles, seriously, "but I don't see what it has to do with the subject in hand."

"Don't you see? If mother had trouble enough and to spare, just for once, she'd be glad enough to give it a wide space afterwards."

"Tom," said Charles, stopping short in the middle of the road, "you are certainly a little no-or-do-well, but there may be something in this plan of yours, after all."

The turkey was smoking on the table, brown, crackling and odorous, when the three children returned from church—the tarts were perfect. Moreover the widow had opened a bottle of her nine-year old currant wine to celebrate the close of the banquet, to say nothing of the stone pitcher of crystal-clear cider that sparkled beside it.

"There—sit up, children," said the widow, as she arranged the last apple pie to its allotted corner. "I have no appetite to eat."

Tom dropped his knife and fork. Susan looked up dismayed.

"Mother," cried Charles, "we can't eat a mouthful unless you sit down to the table with us."

"I'll sit down, then, but I couldn't swallow—my troubles has clear taken away my appetite."

So the widow sat down, like a raven, in bombazine and clear-starched muslin, and brooded sorrowfully over the banquet.

"And now, mother," said Susan, seriously, after the meal had been done ample justice to, "are you ready to hear the news I wished to tell you?"

"Yes; I s'pose I'm as ready as I ever shall be," said Mrs. Spencer, dolorously. "There goes one of my best tumbler on the hearth—nothing but ill-luck comes to me. Oh, dear, I don't see much use in living."

"Farmer Wyllis has turned me away," said Susan, soberly, "and he has kept back three months' wages for a set of glass I was unfortunate enough to break last week."

"Turned you away? Then there'll be no use in your trying to get another place anywhere 'round here," shrieked the widow. "Oh, Susan, Susan—and I'd calculated on your wages to pay the taxes this year. What is to become of us?"

"I don't know," said Susan, with a sort of gloomy obstinacy. "You always said we were hunted down by ill-luck, mother, and I believe you were right. And this is not the worst of it; Mr. Parker has lost some money and believes Tom took it, and Tom is never to show his face there again."

"It's a falsehood," screamed Mrs. Spencer—"my Tom is as honest as the day is long. My Tom wouldn't touch a sixpence that did not belong to him."

"That may be," said Susan, "but appearances are against him; and Tom's character is just as much injured as if he had in reality been the thief."

Mrs. Spencer wrung her hands.

"Come here, Tom, my poor, persecuted boy," she sobbed; "I know you are no thief, and your old mother will stand by you if all the rest of the world should turn away."

"As for me, mother," said Charles, gloomily, "I've left my place at Harker & Co.'s, and I've made up my mind to try my fortune somewhere else."

"Left your place at Harker's? Charles, are you crazy? And such a nice place as it was, with a fair chance for promotion."

"Can't help that," said Charles, shrugging his shoulders. "Who wants to spend his life plodding like that? I want a little life, and Stokes and Merriman are going next week—"

"The worst characters in the village," pleaded the widow, eagerly. "Oh, Charles, my son, don't go with them—stay with your old mother, for pity's sake. I'd rather see you in your grave than mixed up with such a set, my boy."

But Charles sat sullenly, looking into the fire, paying no heed to the piteous appeal.

"You wouldn't talk so, mother, if you knew how necessary it was to make money. The C— bank shut up last night."

"The bank where all our little savings were—oh, my son, what are we to do?"

"What other people do, of course, when trouble comes upon them."

"But I never had any trouble before, at least not since your poor dear father died. And now it has all come at once."

"Never had any trouble, mother," repeated Charles, significantly; "why, it was only this morning you were complaining that you never had anything else."

"But I didn't mean what I was saying," wailed Mrs. Spencer, rocking herself backwards and forwards. "I was tempting Providence by my folly and ill-temper. Oh, dear, if I could only see my way clear through this real trouble, I never would fancy any more trials!"

"Are you sure of that, mother?"

"Yes, quite sure; but it's too late, now. I've had a lesson! I've had a bitter lesson. Oh, why didn't I know how well off I was before?"

Charles looked at Susan. She looked at Tom.

"Mother, it's all nonsense!" cried the latter impulsive youth, laying his curly head in her bombazine lap.

"The bank did shut up last night, but it'll open again to-morrow morning, and Mr. Parker hasn't turned me away, but he says he'll raise my wages on the first of January!"

Mrs. Spencer stared.

"Tom, are you telling me the truth?"

"The exact truth!"

"And, mother," murmured Susan, playing nervously with her mother's cap-strings, "it's all nonsense about Farmer Wyllis turning me away, or stopping my wages. I did break the glass, but the kind farmer said it was no fault of mine, and—and, mother, I'm going to be married to young Wyllis next spring, and going to live at the farmhouse for good!"

"Well, I never!" was all that the astounded widow could find breath to exclaim. "Married to Elanah Wyllis! why he's the smartest fellow in the town."

"I know it, mother," replied Susan; "and, oh, I am so happy!"

"And I, too, have been deceiving you, my poor little mother," said Charles, with a roguish twinkle in his eyes. "I've no idea whatever of going away as long as Harker & Co. continue to be the kind patrons and friends they have hitherto proved!"

The widow looked from one to the other of her laughing children in a sort of happy bewilderment.

"Well, now," she said, slowly, "will you inform me why on earth you told me those terrible stories?"

"Why, mother," said Tom, mischievously, "we thought perhaps a dose of real trouble would cure you of the imaginary ones that have made you so miserable all your life long!"

"And you have solemnly promised us, mother, that after this you would conjure up no more fancied trials to make yourself wretched!" said Susan.

"Well," said the widow, half disposed to laugh, half inclined to be vexed, "are you not ashamed of yourselves, children, to go and play such a mean trick on your poor old mother? But I do say there are worse troubles in the world than I've got!"

The widow's Christmas lesson proved an efficacious one. She never grumbled any more.

"Mother always sees the sunny side of things now," said Tom, "and ain't it jolly?"

Tom was right!

A. R.

The betrothment of the Prince of Oldenburg with the Princess Eugénie of Leuchtenburg is announced in the Russian journals.





[SQUIRE MARK'S GHOST.]

## ELEANOR.

It was a clear, crisp evening, no matter how many years ago, towards the latter end of December, with the crimson beams of sunset streaming down through the leafless aisles and arches of the old woods, and reflecting themselves in red, sullen rays in the little brook, whose noisy current, half choked by fallen leaves, chattered along the roadside—an evening when the air was full of chilly, spicy sweetness, and the coming frosts brought an invigorating thrill in their train. It was just possible, though, that my own feelings unconsciously invested sky and scene with something of their own buoyancy; for I was on my way to Folkesworth Abbey to make my first visit to Eleanor Maurice, who had promised to become my wife next June.

I had come as far as Cheltern by the Great Western Railway that afternoon; thence by stage-coach to the thriving little village of South Cheltern, where I had taken post-horses to Folkesworth; rather a circuitous route, but I had been quite aware, before leaving London, that Folkesworth Abbey was situated in one of the most secluded portions of the country, and, with my own pleasant thoughts to bear me company, I had not, as yet, suffered from ennui. But now, as the red heraldry along the western sky changed into orange brightness, I began to be a little impatient.

"Drive faster, boy," I called to my charioteer. "You couldn't crawl more slowly over the ground if you were a snail! Put a little more life into your beasts!"

"We've come pretty middling fast, sir, considering," grumbled the postboy, a dried-up little fellow, not far from sixty, to whom the term "boy" seemed ridiculously inexplicable. "Hosses is hosses, and you can't get railway speed out on 'em. The road is rutty, besides, and—"

"Where are you turning to? That isn't the Abbey road—your landlord said it lay to the left!"

The postboy stared, and scratched his shock head with the whip handle.

"Th' Abbey road, sir? Arn't 'ee going to Folkesworth village?"

"No—I'm going to Folkesworth Abbey."

"To-night, sir?"

I began to lose patience with his open-mouthed interrogatories.

"To-night? of course, to-night! Did you suppose I meant to wait here until to-morrow morning?"

The postboy whipped up his horses, muttering some sulky rejoinder, and we rattled off over the half-frozen roads in a regular John Gilpin style.

"Hold up here!" I called out, breathless and panting, as I felt myself bumped from one side to the other of the old rattlebox of wood, glass, and musty leather that was by courtesy denominated a post-chaise. "Do you want to break every bone in my body?"

What do you mean by this neck-or-nothing driving?"

"If a'd knowed 'ee was for Folkesworth Abbey a'd ha' had 'ee there long afore. T' old place bain't canny after dark. If ee'd take my advice, ee'd turn back now afore worse comes o't!"

"What on earth do you mean?"

The postboy shook his head.

"All t' county knows o't 'ghost at Folkesworth Abbey, as brings a blight on whoever sees it."

"Ghost! Nonsense, man!"

"Why ee couldn't hire a chap in t' town to stop there all night—no, not for twenty pound. Old Giles Folkesworth's 'ghost has walked there these sixty year. The very dogs howl when they go by the door, after the dusk set in!"

"But Mr. Maurice's family live there?"

"They won't stop long, sir. Nobody can't stand it. T' squire hain't lived there this twenty year, come Michaelmas! Don't ee think ee'd better get back to

the Haro an' Hounds till mornin', sir?" he added, persuasively, checking the reins.

"Drive on!" I cried, imperatively. "I would rather face all the ghosts in Pandemonium than go over that road again to-night."

Away we jingled, clattered and rattled once more, the postboy shouting at his lean steeds and waving his whip over their heads, while I held desperately on to the mouldy straps, and strove to keep my equilibrium as best I might.

Our speed was productive of at least one good result; the orange glow had not yet faded from the western horizon when we drove up to the great stone portico of Folkesworth Abbey, with its carved and heavy stone columns.

Eleanor was there to welcome me, with a bright, loving face, and eyes whose blue light told me more than her lips—my Eleanor, whom I had wooed and won.

Mr. Maurice, too, came forward to meet me, a tall, thin, gentlemanly person, wrapped in an invalid's dressing-gown and walking slowly, with the aid of a cane, and his wife, a sweet-faced matron, with an exquisitely toned voice, and eyes like Eleanor's.

Folkesworth Abbey was different from the snug homesteads to which I had been accustomed—a huge, ruinous old place, with one end draped with luxuriantly growing ivy, and wide-echoing halls whose arched roofs and stone pavements gave one an idea of perpetuity which I had never before experienced. Bay windows, with stone mullions and lozenge-shaped panes of blue and crimson glass extended towards the east, and oriels of amber and emerald terminated the long galleries.

"One side of the Abbey is entirely closed, and the windows boarded up," said Eleanor as we walked together down the long corridor. "Oh, Charles, it is such a strange, weird, lonesome place!"

"And how about your ghost, Nell?"

"Our ghost?" She paused, and even in the uncertain twilight I could see the colour mount into her face.

"Yes—my postboy was quite eloquent on the subject, and even wanted me to turn back, sooner than face the supernatural horrors that appear to cling around Folkesworth Abbey!"

I could feel her fingers tighten involuntarily over my arm.

"I believe the villagers have an old tradition about a ghost—the ghost of old Giles Folkesworth who perished a century ago by his own hand—who is supposed to haunt the corridors and flit down the stone staircases at night. All old places like this have some such rumour connected with them. Of course we know it is nothing but an idle superstition, but we have great trouble in keeping servants and—you will think me foolish if I go on, Charles?"

"I shall never think that of my little rosebud—speak on!"

"I did fancy one night last July, as I came across the hill, that something brushed past me, cold and chill, like the air from a churchyard vault—an old man's figure, with streaming white locks and hands clasped over his forehead, where the pistol bullet went through. Of course it was but the phantom of my fervid fancy; Hester, the dairy-maid, had been telling ghost stories all the afternoon; but the strangest part is yet to come. When I entered the library papa asked who had just passed through the hall—an old man, he said, apparently in great haste! Now, Charles, you know how perfectly superstition-proof papa is!"

"Did you tell him?"

"Yes, but he jested me about my fears and assured me it was probably a servant, or, more likely still, that we had both been deceived by the cloudy moonlight and the wind murmuring through the angles of the old hall."

"My little one, you are nervous—I can feel your arm tremble like a leaf. Suppose we change the conversation. Tell me how you happened to leave the old red brick manor-house that you described to me last year as your home."

And Eleanor told me a curious story. It seems that her mother's father and the present Squire Folkesworth had been twin brothers, and by some undue influence brought to bear upon the dying hours of Basil Folkesworth, their father, the entire family estate and property had been willed to Squire Mark, to the utter exclusion of his brother.

Of course this injustice had entailed no end of bitter feelings, law-suits and quarrels, but the legal network was too closely woven to admit of any flaw, and Squire Mark held vigorously on to his broad lands and gold.

"But since grandpapa died," continued Eleanor, pacing up and down the stone flags in the mellow autumnal moonlight, with her little hand resting on my arm, "I think his heart has softened a little towards mamma and her children. When the lease of the Manor House expired, and it was sold, he wrote

a brief, brusque letter, telling us that the Abbey might be our home if we pleased, and mamma thinks, from one or two expressions he used, that he means, in his will, to render us something like justice. The Folksworths of the Lake country fully expect to be his heirs, although their relationship is almost too distant to be traced."

She sighed softly as she added, after a moment's silence:

"I often think how many cares and troubles would be taken from papa's shoulder if Uncle Mark should leave us a little of his property—and, after all, we are in equity entitled to a share, if not in law."

Then the conversation branched away from the old Folksworth miser to other things, and we stood, side by side, under the swinging ivy-garlands of the eastern door, talking as lovers will talk, while the stately old cedars on the lawn cast their black reflections athwart the golden beamy moonlight that rested on the slopes, and the river, moaning softly through the ravine far below, sent up its voice in an almost audible refrain through the silence.

(All this was years ago; but when I close my eyes I can see the cedar boughs waving in the moonlight, and hear the voiceless 'plaining' of the river down in the ravine.)

The old clock in the hall struck eleven before I went to my room, where two wax candles, in antique silver sconces, burned before the dressing-glass, and a bright fire of logs blazed upon the wide, old-fashioned hearth with an hospitable, crackling sound, and a ruddy shine which did far more towards illuminating the room than the pale lustre of the two wax lights.

It was an odd, olden-time sort of apartment, with wainscoting of polished oak; a huge waxed floor, with a narrow square of fringed Turkey carpeting laid down directly before the fire-place; and deep bay-windows looking upon the lawn, and hung with draperies of faded crimson. The bed, also, with its hangings of the same dull red, its tall bedposts and rounded canopy, gave a gloomy aspect to the room; and a cabinet of some dark foreign wood in the corner caught the sudden gleams of fire-light on its polished surface, and made me think of red, sullen eyes glaring momentarily at me, and then being closed.

Wearily as I was with my day's travel, I could not go to sleep at once, even after I had extinguished the wax lights and laid my tired head on the huge frilled pillow, which smelt deliciously of dried rose-leaves. I tried every expedient which I had ever heard of for wooing the shy spirit of sleep. I counted a hundred forward and backward; I cast my eyes round and round the ceiling; I thought of innumerable flocks of lambs leaping over a low stone wall in interminable succession; and just when I was abandoning these childish attempts in disgust, and reconciling myself to a night of vigil—I went to sleep.

What awakened me I do not know. It was as if a voice had whispered in my ear, or a hand had been laid suddenly upon my temples; yet when I started up in my bed no voice nor hand was near. The fire had burned low, and was emitting a ruddy, clear glow from its embers; the moonlight lay in squares of tremulous silver upon the waxed floor beyond the windows; and the old clock in the hall struck "one" with a solemn, sepulchral sound, as I sat listening with dilated eyes, and even bedewed with cold perspiration. All was silent as death; yet I felt, instinctively, that I was not alone in the apartment!

Noislessly I put back the red hangings of the bed. There was the huge, claw-footed arm-chair where I had drawn it, close to the left side of the hearth; but, merciful heaven! it was not empty! There, with his death-pale face turned away from me, and one hand clasped tightly over the temples, sat the figure of an old man, spare, but stalwart, with silver hair streaming away from his brows, and the other hand groping with a sort of blind persistency among the whitened drifts of ashes beneath the bright brass fire-dogs.

And then with a suddenness of an inspiration, I remembered all I had heard of the Folksworth Ghost; more particularly Eleanor's description, which so marvellously coincided with this appalling vision.

For a moment body and flesh-qualified and shrank, as before the awful presence of a visitant from the other world. Then mind and reason boldly asserted their supremacy. I sprang from my bed, and in an instant stood beside the claw-footed arm-chair.

It was empty!

The fire, flickering up in its last brightness, played fantastically over the faded velvet cushions; the window curtains, stirred by the currents of night wind that made their way through lintel and mullion, swayed softly to and fro; but other sight or sound there was none.

"Pooh! You had been dreaming!" says the realist. But I tell you solemnly and distinctly I had not been dreaming. All the impressions and sureties of the real were about me. I never for an instant questioned the evidence of my senses, even though they seemed to contradict themselves. That the horrible visitant had been there, I knew; although I was totally unable to account for his sudden disappearance.

I lighted the candles, piled fresh wood upon the fire, and then commenced a thorough search through the room, neglecting no corner nor recess, and opening the doors of the carved wooden cabinet, in whose narrow shelves and formal rows of pigeon-holes a kitten could scarcely have secreted itself. But my quest was entirely without success, and I lay down once again; not to sleep, however, for the thick, muffled breathings of my heart, and the cold sweat that would keep starting out on my forehead, forbade anything akin to repose, but to watch the fire shine on the walls, and to count the slow, measured ticking of the old hall clock, until the mellow glow of sunrise turned the window hangings to fluted folds of the most vivid crimson.

I think no one was ever more genuinely glad to welcome "rosy-fingered Aurora" than I, upon that cloudless December morning.

I had resolved to keep my midnight adventure to myself. No man cares to have it supposed that he actually believes in ghosts, nor does he wish to have the evidence of his startled senses laughed down to the cold, clear limits of reason. So, when the family commented on my pale cheeks and heavy eyes, at the breakfast-table, I attributed them to having taken a slight cold the previous evening, in the too well-ventilated equiptage of my friend, the postboy.

"And now, what else have you to show me, Nell?" I asked, after breakfast, when Mr. Maurice had gone to his study, and his wife had disappeared into the mystic precincts where she daily gave audience to her spectacled old housekeeper.

"The family portraits—I suppose you would like to see them? Some of them are very old and valuable, we are told."

Having no ancestors myself (my grandfather kept a very respectable shop in London, and my father's speculations in leather placed his children in independence), I naturally attached over-importance to that possession in others, and followed Eleanor into the second gallery with a good deal of interest.

How fair, fresh and youthful she looked, sitting along beneath the grim effigies of knight, lady and mitred priest, as she pointed them out one by one to my notice.

And yet these dim, silent corridors seemed no place for her! I was glad to think the time was not far off when I should bring her to a brighter summer home, when the past should be merged into the future.

"My heavens! Am I dreaming or awake?" "Charles, how you started! For mercy's sake, what is the matter?"

For I had paused, pale and trembling, before a tarnished gilt frame, from which looked down upon me—the very face I had beheld in my vision, apparition, call it what you will, of the night before!

"It is nothing, Nelly, nothing! Do not look so terrified, my love. And this, I suppose, is the portrait of old Giles Folksworth, who shot himself—at least, so I should judge from the description you gave me of what people call his ghost!"

"Oh, no!" laughed Nelly. "This is my Uncle Mark, who is in Naples or Rome now, and a very good likeness they say. Giles Folksworth's picture is farther down."

And this was Squire Mark. Strange—passing strange! If the grim old man had stepped down from the dusty canvas and entered my room in the silence of the midnight, the resemblance—I might almost say the identity—could not have been stronger or more startling. For a moment I felt almost as if the boundaries between finite and supernatural were giving way, as if I were walking in a strange, fitful dream.

"Let us go on, Nelly," I said; but I was not much the wiser for the rest of the old Folksworth portraits.

That night I left the Abbey.

My friend the postboy was apparently rather relieved to see me once more in the flesh, when I made my appearance at the South Cheltern Inn.

"Did 'ee see 't' ghost, sir?" he whispered, in a hollow tone, shouldering my valise as I prepared to depart.

"Ghost!" I answered, somewhat sharply. "Nobody believes in ghosts now-a-days. Here's half a crown for you, and let's hear no more nonsense about ghosts!"

The postboy was evidently disappointed, but the half-crown seemed to reconcile him to my scepticism on the subject of the Folksworth Ghost.

Nearly a month had passed since that eventful December night. I was enjoying the grand scenery of

the Lake district, when one morning a letter was brought me in Eleanor Maurice's pretty, refined chirography.

"I have sad news, Charles," she wrote; "we are all preparing to leave the old Abbey. Uncle Mark is dead at last, and the Westmoreland Folksworths have sent the lawyer to take possession. Papa would not believe for a long time but that there was some will more recent than the old one executed in 1856, but we are at last obliged to succumb to fate. Does it not seem hard? And what makes it more affecting still is, that Uncle Mark had commenced a kind letter to mamma the very night of his death, which he never lived to finish. Cannot you come down to the Abbey? We are all so distressed. Papa's health has received a very severe shock by all this business, and mamma hardly knows what is best to do. Uncle Mark died at one o'clock on the morning of the twenty-fourth of December, in Naples."

"One o'clock on the morning of the twenty-fourth of December!" The blood ran chill in my veins as I read those words and remembered that it was at one o'clock on the morning of the twenty-fourth of December that the ghostly old man had sat in the arm-chair by my dying fire, with silver hair streaming back from his temples, one hand pressed to his brow, and the other—

Well, what was it? Why did I start to my feet with fevered flashes running over my brow, and a strange, muffled beating at my heart? It was only a whim, to be sure—a superstitious fancy; but some invisible power seemed speeding me on!—some power which defied resistance.

I packed my valise with a rapidity that astonished even myself, and rushed downstairs.

How tedious that journey seemed to me. Even when we rattled down, by express, from Bridgewater to Cheltern, I fancied our progress was intolerably slow, and kept questioning the guard as to whether we were not getting behind the regulation time.

"I am sure we are behind," I said, glancing at my watch, and consulting the darkening sky.

"No, sir; we're due at 4.50, and at 4.50 we shall run into the station," returned the man, resolutely.

He was right. We were neither behind nor in advance, but exactly in time. My impatience had weighed the minutes with lead.

"It's my belief nothin' short o' comets and shootin' stars would satisfy that gen'l'man," I heard the much-enduring guard grumble to one of the officials at Cheltern station, as I sprang out of the carriage, and hurried across the platform.

Once more my ancient friend, the postboy, rattled me over the bleak Folksworth road, taking particularly good care this time to land me at my destination before it was actually dark.

Nobody answered my hurried knock. I opened the door and went in.

Through a half-open door beyond light streamed out across the chilly hall. I followed the beacon, and surprised Eleanor, packing her little writing-desk before the study fire, and dropping a good many silent tears into it. My footsteps on the threshold startled her.

"Charles!"

She sprang to her feet, with a little fluttering scream.

"Yes, I, myself, Nelly!"

And that was the end of the tears for that night.

So I was in Uncle Mark's room once again, with the huge, moss-fringed logs crackling noisily on the hearth, and the wax candles burning in their silver sconces, the fast-falling snow clicking softly against the panes of the bay window without, while the ancient clock, striking ten in the hall, sounded like the voice of some old familiar friend, close at hand.

It was a bitterly cold night, but my first rather unaccountable proceeding, after having securely locked and bolted the heavy oaken door, was to tear the fire to pieces, remorselessly raking aside its newly kindled brightness, scattering the red embers on either side, and finally cooling the heated hearthstones with water from my urn of quaint India china.

I have since often thought how strange my conduct would have appeared had any eye but my own been invisibly present to witness it. I should certainly have been set down in the first place for a burglar, and in the second for a maniac.

And now commenced the actual work which I had proposed to myself.

The square, discoloured blocks of marble were heavy, and the cement which united them strong and solid, but I had provided myself amply for all such exigencies.

I was a little discouraged at first by unexpectedly encountering a second lid of cemented stone beneath the first, but a little resolution and patience soon overcame this additional obstacle, and, as I



lifted an oblong slab of stone, some seven or eight inches long and three deep, from the left-hand corner, I saw, with startled eyes and fast-beating heart, a curiously wrought box, scarcely larger than one of the perfumed glove-receivers used by our fashionable modern belles.

With hands that trembled like a leaf, and which were torn and bleeding from their severe and unusual toil, I raised my treasure from its mysterious lurking-place.

The lid, fastened only by two hasps and staples, yielded readily to my endeavours to open it, and there—as indeed I had fully expected—lay an oblong folded piece of paper, tied with yellow tape—the last will and testament of Mark Meriwether Folkesworth, executed in the year 1856, leaving all his property, real and personal, with the exception of a few unimportant legacies, to “Eleanor Mary, his beloved niece, and the wife of Henry Maurice.”

I sat down by the chill and ash-strewn fire-place, all my factitious strength as utterly gone out of me as if it had never existed. I remembered that Eleanor had told me her uncle's last visit to Folkesworth Abbey had taken place just before they themselves came to reside in the antique pile; and it seemed as if I could read the old man's mind like an open book; the long-smothered feeling of kindness; the tardy repentance; the unwillingness to reveal what amends he had made; the odd, miserly instinct of concealment permeating it all.

And then I remembered, with a strange, indescribable thrill of awe, the ghostly figure, with the floating silver hair, and groping hand, that I had seen the self-same night Mark Meriwether Folkesworth died, miles and leagues away.

The will had been found at last! I did not envy any sceptred monarch his feelings the next morning when I carried the yellow paper downstairs and laid it in Mrs. Maurice's lap. At length the tumult of surprise, astonishment, and delight, shaped itself into questions.

“But, Charles, how came you to search in that particular spot? What suggested the idea to you?”

“Your Uncle Mark, my love, himself.”

And then I related to them the incidents of that night, while they listened with faces paler than the snow without, and bated breath.

“Charles, you must have been dreaming!” uttered Mr. Maurice, in a subdued tone, after a momentary silence had succeeded my narrative.

“Possibly, sir; but there lies the will to prove that my dream was not all a dream.”

Yes, there it lay; and I had found it!

Well, I have told my straightforward, unvarnished tale, with no more incident than was absolutely necessary to its perspicuity. What need is there of farther circumlocution? Of course, the Lake Country Folkesworths disputed the newly discovered document, step by step, but the final decision of the courts of law placed it incontrovertibly in the possession of Eleanor Maurice's parents.

And when I married her a few months subsequently, and took her with me to my own home, we had the satisfaction of leaving Mr. and Mrs. Maurice in undisturbed tenancy of the grim old Abbey and all its belongings, supernatural and otherwise.

How do I account for the whole mysterious sequence of events? I don't pretend to account for them at all. I for one am willing to confess that there is “more in earth and sky” than the philosophy of any Horatio has ever dreamed of! I know that your matter-of-fact man would say: “What could be more reasonable than that, after an evening of ghost stories, a man should go to sleep and dream the whole thing over again? And as for the strange resemblance between the figure of your disturbed slumbers and Squire Mark Folkesworth, all old men look alike, to a certain degree. The fact that you happened to be a visitor at Folkesworth Abbey the night the squire died at Naples was nothing more than a rather singular coincidence. And as for the will buried under the hearthstone of the apartment that the old man occupied during his last sojourn at the Abbey, did not all the circumstances of his outlandish, eccentric life point with unerring finger to some such end at last?”

Yes, I am perfectly alive to the common-sense weight and soundness of all these arguments, and yet I don't believe in one of them.

Nothing will ever convince me that on the morning of the twenty-fourth day of December at one o'clock the ghost of old Mark Folkesworth did not appear to me, striving dumbly to communicate the secret that had perished with him on his lonely death-bed at Naples. You may believe it or not, as you please. I neither ask the credulity nor demand the faith of my readers. I am only stating my own firm belief and convictions.

H. F. G.

**SIR JOHN FRANKLIN'S GRAVE.**—Sir John Franklin's grave is probably discovered. Captain Hall, it seems, learned from some Esquimaux whom he met on a sledging tour that at about the time Franklin's vessel was lost the crew built a brick vault on shore, buried a body, and built up the tomb. Captain Hall organized an expeditionary force from the whaling vessels, promising 500 dols. to each man to make a visit to the indicated spot. The vessel which brought these meagre details is probably the last of the arrivals for this season from the Arctic fishing-grounds, and since there will of course be none during the winter or spring, it is not likely that we shall have definite information before next summer.

## THE DUCHESS VISCONTI.

### CHAPTER VI.

UPON the Corso Ludovico, close by the bridge which spanned the grand canal, stood a party of young men, six in number, engaged in loud and sportive conversation, flashing out snatches of convivial songs, passing jests, and occasionally flinging light quips at the passers-by. They had evidently just come from the tavern, and were ripe for sport or riot.

“By the ivy-crowned Bacchus!” cried one of the party, “I swear I'll give a golden sequin to him who will tell me where I can find Ludovico.”

“By the mass!” retorted another, with a laugh, “I swear 'twould be as easy for you to find Ludovico as to find that golden sequin you speak of.”

“Good! good!” cried two or three others. “What say you to that, Thomaso?”

“I say that yonder blabber is a simpleton. There are plenty of golden sequins in Milan, and I can do as he has done for the last ten years—steal them!”

“Ha, ha—good again! But, soberly, we should all like to find Ludovico. He was a scamp of the first water, and as dishonest as the very father of falsehood; but when he had money he spent it freely, and we were sure to come in for our share of wine and pleasure. Not another of our number could turn a false die like him; and as for cards, he dealt them out as it suited him. I fear some ill has befallen him. It is now a month since we have seen him.”

“More than a month. It was a month last Friday. Don't you remember—we have seen no sign of him, nor heard any word, since the affair that happened in Matteo Bellani's shop?”

“Aye,” ventured one of the more sober ones; “that was the last time; and I believe Ludovico has hidden his head for shame.”

“Bah! Ludovico would never have done that. He would have—”

“What, Pazzolo? Why do you stop so suddenly?”

“A new thought has struck me,” replied the youth, smiting his palms together. “I was about to say that Ludovico, instead of hiding his head for shame, would have sought revenge upon the man who had so grossly insulted him, and I believe he has sought that revenge. He has met Matteo, and has been overcome; and I doubt not that his body is even now in the canal!”

This proposition was a startling one, and some of the number thought it well founded; but there was one man who scouted the idea as ridiculous. However, the conversation was directed into a new channel by the appearance of a gondola which was coming towards the landing close at hand.

“Diavolo!” cried Thomaso, “whom have we here? Look at that garb! Is it male or female? Is it nun or friar? Brother or sister?”

“It's a woman, certainly,” said one of the others.

“Aye,” exclaimed another, clapping his hands, “it is old Cassandra, the witch of St. Borromeo.”

At the sound of that name—one which had once been the source of great excitement in Milan—a name the mention of which had caused weak women to tremble and children to hide their heads—the party moved down towards the landing, the spirit of mischief sparkling in their eyes.

The woman, who was the sole passenger of the small gondola, had a dark cowl drawn over her face; but as the boat approached the landing she had thrown it back in order that she might see the bridge, and also see where she was to land, and in doing so she had exposed her features. And they were features which, once seen, were not to be forgotten. The skin was dark; the brow low and corrugated; the eyes black and piercing; the cheeks sunken; the nose thin and sharp, and very prominent; the lips tightly drawn upon a mouth rather small; and the chin narrow and receding. Her hair, escaping from beneath the side of the cowl over her shoulder, was black as the plumage of the raven, save where, here

and there, in strange and striking contrast, a streak of pure white marked the ebony mass, showing that the woman was past the meridian of life. It was a Syrian face—Arab or Moor—if one might judge by its contour.

As the woman noticed the party above she quickly recovered her face; when she had stepped out upon the landing, and had paid the gondolier, she hurried up towards the Corso, seeking to avoid observation. But our *giovannotti* were not to let her pass so easily. Thomaso placed himself before her, and commanded her to stop and remove the cowl from her face.

“Do not detain me, good masters,” she pleaded. “I am on a peaceable errand, and I mean to interfere with no one.”

“Oh, oh, you are a queer old hag, to be sure. Do you suppose we, who are placed here by the Podesta, to watch and report all who land from the canal, can so far neglect our duty as to let you pass with that ugly covering over your face? Oh, no, no, it must not be! Let us see the charms that lie concealed beneath your thick veil. Come—unmask!”

“Gentlemen,” pleaded the woman, seeking to pass, and stepping back as she was headed off, “what means this unseemly interruption? Why should you harass me thus?”

“Out upon thee for a lying witch!” screamed Pazzolo. “Do you think you can hide those features? Come—let us have a fair view of them, that we may see if you have changed. Mercy! it seems an age since you were banished from the city.”

“Tell us, Cassandra,” put in another of the party—a coarse, brutal fellow, whose eyes were inflamed with much drinking—at the same time pushing forward and standing before the woman, “how many little ones have you strangled within a twelvemonth? Oh, don't seek to hide your head! We know you. I'll wager anything that you made your breakfast this morning from an infant's arm. Oh, I wish Ludovico was here now. The last time we saw you he was with us; and don't you remember how he pricked you with his rapier? Ha, ha, ha, that was rare sport. But poor Ludovico is missing. Perhaps you have spirited him away.”

“Ludovico missing?” repeated the woman, with a slight start.

“He's been gone more than a month. Have you seen him?”

“No, good sir, I have not. And now I beg you will let me pass.”

“Not until you have uncovered that handsome face of thine. Nay, be not so coy. There have been days when a young man would not have pleaded in vain in such a cause.”

At this point the woman sprang aside and sought to make her way to the Corso, but two or three of her tormentors caught her by her clothing and pulled her back.

“Help, help!” she cried, struggling in vain to free herself from the drunken men. “In mercy's name, is there no help for a woman who is thus insulted? Help, help!”

At that moment a man leaped down from the Corso, and pushed his way through to where the woman stood.

“How now, wretches! Is it thus you waylay and maltreat helpless women? Shame on you! Come, my good woman, I will lead you to the Corso, and there you may care for yourself.”

As the newcomer thus spoke two of the bacchanals grasped the woman by the left arm, and drew her forcibly back; and as this unlooked-for movement caused the intruder to let go his hold, she fell to the ground with a force that made her groan with pain.

“Oh, oh, Master Matteo!” cried one of those who stood in front, “do you offer yourself as champion of the Lady Cassandra?”

“As champion of the Witch of St. Borromeo?” echoed another.

“By heaven!” exclaimed our hero—for he it was—“I will, at any and all times, protect a defenceless woman from the brutal attack of unmannerly ruffians. So have a care, for this woman is under my protection. You are pretty gentlemen, truly, grand gentlemen!”

“By the holy saints! we'll show you of what stuff our gentility is made, my plebeian fellow. Leave this hag to us, or we'll souse you in the canal!”

“Hi, hi!” yelled Pazzolo. “By our lady, that is a grand idea! In with the pair of them. Ho, what sport! A bath for him, and another for the witch. Up with his heels.”

In their drunken delirium they fancied that they could handle the young artizan; and partly in sport, but far more in anger and chagrin, they made at him, intending to throw him into the canal first, and then the woman in after him. But, ye shades of Atlas and of Hercules! they were as

children in the hands of that stalwart smith! He moved back a pace, and swept his eye over the riotous crew.

"A bath is it?" said he.

"Yes; a bath, a bath!"

No sooner were these words given to the air than Matteo, setting his teeth together and gathering himself for the work, seized Master Thomaso—the oldest and the most bulky of the party—by the shoulder and thigh, and hurled him into the canal, pitching him at least three yards from the landing. As they beheld their companion thus roughly handled, three of the others grasped the artisan, intending to drag him down to the water's edge; but he shook off two of them, and the third he levelled to the earth by a blow under the ear that laid him senseless. Then Pazzolo went sprawling into the canal. Of the three left, he caught one by the neck, and flung him backwards into the water; and another he laid by the side of his senseless companion. The sixth, a puny fellow in yellow silk hose with pink ribbons in his shoes, ingloriously fled up the passage from the landing, and gained the Corso in safety. Those who had been thrown into the water, instead of swimming for the shore, struck out for a gondola that lay close at hand, into which they managed to climb, meantime swearing all sorts of vengeance against the artisan; but they showed not the least disposition to trouble him now.

Upon turning to assist the woman who had thus come under his charge, Matteo found that the fall which she had sustained had lamed her seriously, and as his home was not far away he suggested to her that she should accompany him; with devout blessing she leaned upon his stout arm, and suffered him to lead her up from the landing; on the way she told how the riotous crew had abused her.

Matteo Bellani had seen the woman before. He knew that she was called Cassandra; and he remembered that there had been, a few years before, considerable excitement in certain circles on account of her having been accused of witchcraft.

She had been tried before a secret tribunal, but some powerful influence, brought to bear from an unknown quarter, had saved her; and he remembered, also, that the very fact of her acquittal by a tribunal which had never before sent a human being back into the light of day was held by some as evidence that she had exercised a potent spell over her judges, and after that she was forced to flee from the populace for her life.

But Matteo cared nothing for all this. She was to him but a woman in need of help, and he rendered it to her.

In the comfortable apartment, in the rear of the armourer's shop, bolstered up in a large easy-chair which his son had made on purpose for him, sat Nicolas Bellani.

He was an old man, threescore years and ten, thin, frail and weak, having been stricken with palsy for a number of years, and having been called to endure suffering of the most wearing kind.

But his eye was as bright as ever, and even now he sometimes persuaded Matteo to wheel him into the shop, where he could suggest the improvements in his favourite piece of handiwork. He was murmuring to himself of the long absence of his boy, and was upon the point of calling Spanco from the shop, when Spanco came of his own accord, and announced that Matteo was coming.

This Spanco was a genius in his way—a good-natured stout, burly fellow, of middle-age, who worked at the forge, and brought out the articles of steel and iron in the rough. He worshipped his youthful master, and was as kind and gentle as a woman to the palsied old man.

As Spanco withdrew Matteo came in.

"Ah, my son—you are late. Eh! a woman?"

"Yes, father—a poor, defenceless creature whom I found in the hands of a set of graceless scamps, and whom I rescued from their foul clutches."

The woman had sunk down into a chair, and as the cowl fell back from her head the light from the window shone full upon her face.

"Holy Mother!" gasped Nicolas Bellani, starting as though the earth had quaked beneath his feet, "what is this? In the name of all the saints and demons, how came that woman here? Out! out! Away with her!"

"Nicolas Bellani," spoke the woman, lifting her hands towards him, "you do me wrong in your heart. I sought not your roof."

"But why have you come back to Milan? You promised that you would never set foot within these walls again!"

With an effort the woman arose and stood by the old man's chair, and when she spoke her voice was so deep and so solemn that its effect was irresistible.

"Nicolas, listen to me: as I hope for the smile of heaven in the world beyond the grave, I give you a promise that I have come to Milan for no harm; and

in the end you shall thank heaven, and thank poor old Cassandra! I came here now entirely independent of my own will; but I am here. Trust me, Nicolas; in the name of heaven, trust me!"

The old man bowed his head a few moments, and when he lifted it his first movement was to motion his son to leave.

"It is nothing to you, Matteo. I was foolish just now. Think nothing of it. I would speak with this woman alone."

Matteo left the apartment, and crossed the narrow court into the shop, where he found Spanco cleaning up some of his tools. But he did not talk with this man. He went away into the front room, where his musical instruments were, and there sat down with his own thoughts.

And what a range he had for reflection. The scene of the afternoon at the ducal palace—the discovery and proof of Paulina's love—her head resting upon his bosom—the pledge and the kiss, still thrilling to the very centre of his soul. Oh, how enrapturing! But then came the cavedropper like a chill across the scene, and he wondered what the result might be.

Then he thought of the scene at the bridge—the encounter with the riotous crew, the rescue of Cassandra; and then of the strange meeting between the woman and his father.

What did it mean?

He pondered long and anxiously upon it, for his decrepit father had been deeply moved by the unexpected presence.

The sun went down, and Matteo retired to the rear shop, and directed Spanco to lock the doors. After this he went into the sitting-room, where he found his father alone. Cassandra had been weary and had retired to a spare chamber in the dormitory. Matteo would have questioned his father, but the old man with such earnestness implored him to be silent. Our hero sat down with Spanco and ate supper, and at an early hour sought his bed.

How long Matteo Bellani had slept he knew not; but he was aroused from his deep sleep by his attendant, who stood by his bedside, with a lighted taper in his hand, and alarm depicted upon his face.

"What is it, Spanco?"

"Alack! my master, I fear there is trouble brewing. There is a score of men at the door demanding admittance, and I believe they wear the dark robes of the familiars of the Inquisition!"

Matteo leaped from his bed, and caught Spanco by the arm.

"Of the Inquisition, say you?" he demanded.

"I fear so, my master. I went to the upper window and asked what was wanted, and they answered—'Matteo Bellani, the Armourer!' I saw, by the light of a lantern which one of them carried, a blood-red cross upon the breast of the man who answered me."

At that moment a loud knocking upon the outer door was heard, and Matteo sank back upon the edge of his couch trembling with terror. His thoughts were swift and well directed. He remembered the cavedropper at the ducal palace, and he also remembered that a Visconti was at the head of the Holy Tribunal in Milan!

"In heaven's name, my master!" cried the man, fairly quivering with terror when he saw Matteo tremble, "what shall we do? Is there not some way of escape?"

The young artisan arose to his feet like a man suddenly stricken with palsy. A hundred stout men-at-arms, clad in steel, each seeking his life and all moving on together against him would have been as nothing to this, for then he would have had an open foe; but now he stood as one upon whom the plague-spot had made its awful touch—the finger of a power upon him that worked in the dark, and knew no mercy!

"There is no help, Spanco. Go you and tell them I am coming."

#### CHAPTER VII

THE Crusades to the Holy Land had proved a failure; Europe had poured out the best blood of her Christian Knights; the Church had exhausted its treasury; and only defeat and shame had been the result of that mighty and pervading power which centred at Rome. Under these circumstances the Church was most bitter against all forms of heresy, and its vengeance was wreaked upon the luckless individuals against whom this schismatic sin could be brought.

In prosecuting this war upon apostasy that terrible court called the Inquisition was established. It was first organized to try the recusant Albigois of the South of France, in the thirteenth century; and after that branches of the Holy Office rapidly spread, until in the course of fifty years it had been established throughout Catholic Europe.

It would be impossible to depict all the horrors of the Holy Office. Let it be understood that the court was established, not for the punishment of heretics, but for their extermination! Also, that the evidence of the most depraved and corrupt was received, and that the accused never knew who was his accuser. If a man were presented to this tribunal, it simply meant that he was to die.

The policy of the Church was founded upon the proposition that heresy weakened the established religion, and consigned countless souls to perdition; so in exterminating those who were guilty of this thing the Office was doing God's own work. It was a monster that moved at night, performing its work in the dark, without mercy, without heart, and as far from the spirit of Justice as is deadly poison from the spirit of life!

As the savage counts the success of his mission by the number of scalps he brings with him, so did the Inquisition count its effectiveness in behalf of religion by the number of victims given to the executioner! As a rule, arraignment before the Holy Tribunal was fatal; and he who had been once pointed out by the informer might as well have thought to escape the plague when its breath had fallen upon him as to escape the familiars of the Holy Office when they had marked him for their own.

Matteo Bellani understood all this as he turned from his chamber to answer the summons of the familiars; and yet, as is natural with conscious innocence and purity of purpose, he hoped there might be some escape for himself. Escape from the building without falling into the hands of the emissaries was simply impossible; or, if he could succeed in evading them for the night, he would be sure of being found on the morrow. He argued this point with Spanco as he went down the stairs.

"I know," he said, "that as soon as a name is given to the officers one or two secret agents are sent to every gate, and there they must remain until the accused is found; so that escape from the city is impossible. No, good Spanco, it is useless to think of that, for an unsuccessful attempt to escape would be held as positive evidence against me."

By this time they had reached the outer shop, and the voices of those at the door could be heard very plainly.

Matteo stopped here, and placed his hand upon his companion's arm.

"Spanco," he said, hurriedly, but lowly and distinctly, "I know not what charge they will bring against me; but this I do know. Ottone Visconti is Archbishop of Milan, and he is brother to Lorenzo the Duke. I think I am apprehended on some complaint of the duke. You know that I have given lessons in music to the Lady Paulina, ward of Lorenzo; and I know that she is beloved by the archbishop. Now I charge you, Spanco, that you gain audience of the Lady Paulina on the morrow, and that you inform her what has befallen me. I need not caution you, for your own judgment—"

"Not a word of explanation," interrupted the stout attendant. "Give me your directions, and I'll obey them if it lie in human power."

"Right, Spanco. Time passes. Remember the Lady Paulina. That is chief. Tell my father what you please, and have a care for his wants. Keep an eye upon the woman who came here with me, and find out, if you can, who and what she is. That is all. Ha! the door is coming down. I have great faith in the power of Paulina's influence—so have a hope. Now get you out of sight, for if they see you they may take you in anticipation of some complaint."

The faithful man caught his master's hand, and placed it to his lips, and they retreated to the shop, while Matteo advanced to the front door, withdrew the bolts, and threw it open.

It was a solemn crew upon which his gaze fell, but no quite so large as Spanco had represented. There were eight of the familiars, all clad in black robes, two only wearing the red cross upon their bosoms. There were two lanterns, and Matteo observed that three or four of the number had brought up a large stick, or joist of timber from the canal, evidently for the purpose of forcing the door; but they threw it down when they saw him, and moved up behind their leader.

"Gentlemen," spoke our hero, when he had surveyed the scene, "I was asleep when you called for me, and hence the delay. I am informed that

"We seek Matteo Bellani," broke in the foremost of the familiars.

"That is my name."

"Then you will bear us company. But first let us be sure."

Thus speaking he turned to one of his companions, who came forward and held a lantern up until the rays of light fell upon the young man's face, after



which he reported to his superior that this was the man they sought.

"Gentlemen," said Matteo, as they led him down from the narrow piazza, "may I know why I am thus arrested?"

"Because we are so ordered," was the laconic reply.

"Am I a prisoner?"

"At present—yes."

"And before what court am I to appear?"

"You shall know that when the time of your appearance comes. For the time being you had better content yourself with knowing that you will be properly cared for."

They did not offer to bind him, but leading him down into the terrazzo they arranged themselves, one upon each side, three before, and three behind; and in this manner they moved away.

They had reached the Corso Orientale, and were approaching the centre of the town, when their ears were saluted by a loud din, as if of the tramp of many feet mingled with cries and shouts, and presently bright lights flashed in the grand esplanade of the Piazza del Duomo.

Men and boys were seen hurrying to and fro; pikes and sabres flashed in the light of many torches, and on all hands the wildest excitement prevailed. The familiars stopped, for they knew not what to make of it. Their way lay through the grand piazza, but surely it would not be safe to carry their prisoner through such a rabble.

While they stood thus considering the bell of St. Ambrogio pealed forth its thunder notes, and directly afterwards the tocsin of Ambrogio was answered by a peal from the Piazza d'Armi. Matteo's soul was aroused to enthusiasm, and for the moment he forgot that he was a prisoner.

"That is the call of the Podesta," he cried—"the call to arms. The Torriani are trembling in their places of power!"

"How now, signor?" demanded the chief of the familiars. "What know you of the cause of this unseemly disturbance?"

"Are you a Milanese," demanded Matteo, turning upon the speaker, "and know not that Francisco Della Torre is near the end of his race?"

"I do not know it," frankly confessed the emissary; "do you?"

"I do."

"And whence comes the power that can move him?"

"That power is Henry the Seventh!"

"The German Emperor?"

"Yes."

"*Diavolo!* I have heard something of this, but I did not credit it. How gained you the information, signor?"

Matteo had to consider a moment before he made answer to that question. He had gained the intelligence from Paulina—a source, of course, which he could not acknowledge.

"I have read it in the signs of the times," he finally replied. "Has not Della Torre openly trampled upon Henry's authority in Lombardy? Our Iron Crown will fit the Emperor's head, and in our own church of Saint Ambrogio, whose bell now peals forth the tocsin, he has sworn that he will wear it. Francisco has been very foolish."

No sooner had the words dropped from our hero's lips than he was sorry he had spoken them. The familiars nodded significantly, as much as to say: "A meddler with politics!"

But the conversation was not to continue longer. The throng had turned into the Corso Orientale, and the familiars thought it best to turn away. So they retraced their steps, and took the first street that gave promise of leading them from the rabble. When they reached the canal they followed the circular strada till they reached a point against their office, and then they turned up once more into the town.

Ere long, looming up against the starry sky, Matteo saw those gloomy walls which he had so often viewed with awe and dread, and soon he was conducted within the portal, and the clanging of the heavy iron gate sounded its knell behind him.

Across a narrow, paved court, and he was conducted into a sort of guard-room, where there were men armed with heavy spears. One of these arose as the party entered, and when the chief of the emissaries had pronounced the name of the prisoner he turned to a low desk, whereon was a book bound in black cloth, with leaves of thick, coarse parchment, and, having written something in the book, he called up two of his attendants and bade them look to the prisoner.

For the first time, as these armed men, whose countenances were gross and brutal, took him in charge, and conducted him out from the guard-room, our hero allowed himself to entertain thoughts of regret because he had not attempted to make his

escape. Had he sought so to do he was sure he could have done it; but what good could have resulted therefrom? His only state of safety, allowing he could have got away entirely clear, would have been a lifelong banishment from Milan, and perhaps from Lombardy; and he could not think of that. No, no; he would brave the worst rather than be for ever banished from Paulina.

Dark, damp, and dismal were the passages through which the prisoner was led, and drear and noisome was the dungeon into which he was pushed. Walls of masonry, rough and uneven, and covered with a mouldy damp; a miserable pallet upon which was a bundle of decaying straw; a wooden stool; a broken pitcher; and in the centre of the granite floor an iron ring, with a heavy, rusting chain attached. The guard hesitated, and consulted about fixing that chain to the prisoner's body; but they finally concluded to leave his limbs free, feeling assured that the ponderous door, with its heavy bolts on the outside, would be sufficient.

Matteo sat down upon the edge of the pallet and closed his eyes while the bolts were being shot; and when the footsteps of the guard had died away in the distance he looked up into a darkness so intense that it startled him—a darkness horrible and painful it was so terribly unnatural. Once more came regret that he had not tried to escape; but that was so vain that its absurdity quickly drove it from his mind; and as soon as he could call his scattered, rambling thoughts together, he turned them towards the one being who alone hath power over the human destiny.

But even in that Tartarean gloom Matteo Bellani was not shut out from all token of the living world. A low, dull murmur reached his ear, rising and falling like the rumble of thunder among the distant mountains; and this, slight as it was, served to break the awful monotony which else must have pervaded the dungeon.

And now, leaving the youthful artisan in his noisome cell, let us see what was going on.

Henry VII., of the house of Luxembourg, wearied by the petty quarrels of the factions of northern Italy, had marched into the country at the head of a powerful army, and, having reduced all the strongholds thus far attacked, he had finally drawn up before Milan, demanding that the city should not only open its gates to him, but that the Iron Crown of Lombardy, in the keeping of the Milanese, should be placed upon his head.

Francisco Della Torre, the Podesta, knowing that Henry was placing the Ghibellines in power, sought to oppose his entrance; and when the heralds, advancing by the way where now lies the Simplon Road, made their demands, he caused the alarm to be sounded, and called out his knights and men-at-arms to defend the walls.

While the din was at its height there was a curious scene transpiring in the Podesta's private closet.

Demetrius, Francisco's lieutenant, had learned the character and habits of the youth whom Visconti had recognized as his son, and so well had he pursued his purpose that he had become acquainted with even the slightest irregularities of him who had borne the name of Ludovico. And thus had he said to Della Torre:

"My lord, I am sure that this youth, whom your Ghibelline rival has claimed for his son, and upon whose brow he seeks to place the Podesta's crown, cares not for power and authority. He is wild, and loves ease and licentiousness. I'll wager my lieutenant's baton that he would rather have five thousand sequins, with a house and gardens, where he could enjoy the riotous companionship of his friends, than to wear the crown of an emperor. Ambition is not in his nature. I believe he can be bought!"

Acting upon this advice, Francisco Della Torre had sent for the young man, now called Giovanni Visconti, and had spoken to him upon the subject of selling out the Visconti interest. Giovanni listened.

A full hour he sat with the Podesta, and the point that divided them was not compunction at betraying his father, and selling the honour of his noble house, but the only point of trouble was the amount of gold he should receive.

From five thousand sequins they had gone up to eight thousand, and were then hesitating when a courier, dust-covered and breathless, rushed in with the intelligence that the gates of the city had been thrown open, and the German knights and men-at-arms were marching in.

"Sblood!" gasped the Podesta, starting to his feet and clapping his hand upon the hilt of his sword, "what fiend hath sent thee with that news? Who opened the gates? Have my officers turned traitors? Speak, sirrah!"

The messenger gained breath, and then informed Della Torre that the emperor had sent word into the

city, and caused it to be distributed on all hands, that if the Milanese would renounce all allegiance to the Guelphic faction, and honestly declare for the Ghibelline—if they would cast the Torriani from the governor's seat, and enthroned the Visconti instead—he would spare the city and keep his army outside the walls.

They should do this, and allow him to enter the church of St. Ambrogio, and there be crowned with the Iron Crown of Lombardy, and he would then pledge himself that not a soul in Milan should receive harm at his hands.

"And do the cravens listen to the pratings of this imperial adventurer?" demanded Della Torre, gnashing his teeth with rage.

"More than that, my lord. They have declared for Visconti, and in all Milan you have not a score of knights to sound your battle-cry. Ha! Hark! Do you hear that?"

And as the courier spoke up from the broad esplanade came the cry, sounding from thousands of human voices:

"Down with the Guelph! Up with the Ghibelline!"

And anon, with still fiercer volume, arose the shout:

"Death to the Torriani! Long live the Visconti!"

"Idiot!" exclaimed Giovanni, starting towards the door, "did you think to buy a Visconti with money? Could you not see that I was trifling with you for the purpose of sounding your plans?"

Francisco Della Torre cast upon the wretch a look of contempt, and in tones of withering scorn he said:

"Go, base trickster; and may the curse of your elevation to the ducal chair fall upon the Visconti! I can ask for no greater evil."

Giovanni Visconti hurried out from the Podesta's palace, and as he went he planned to himself how, if his interview with Della Torre should transpire, he might turn it by falsehood in his favour. He passed through streets thronging with enthusiastic people, and the burden of the vocal din which saluted his ears was fealty to his house. But when he reached the Visconti palace he found a new element in the popular cry—with the name of Visconti, reverberating together from street to street, went that of THE EMPEROR.

And before the morning dawned it had become known all through Milan that, at an hour past midnight, Henry of Luxembourg had entered the city and proceeded directly to the palace of Visconti; and from that hour those men and women of the Milanese who represented labour and production, and who had to bear the brunt of the fighting when fighting was to be borne, bore aloft the standard of the Ghibelline, and swore fealty to that political faction.

(To be continued.)

MRS. BLOOMER.—The celebrated Mrs. Bloomer, who introduced the Bloomer costume about eighteen years ago, now lives in Council Bluffs on the Missouri. She is now a middle-aged lady of pleasing manners and appearance. She dresses in the prevailing fashion and has little trace of the strong-mindedness generally ascribed to such reformers. Yet she is engaged in the female suffrage movement in Kansas, and the speeches of John Stuart Mill are upon her tables. Mr. and Mrs. Bloomer and family live in good style, in a pleasant part of the town.

"LEAVING BOOKS."—We have recently received several remonstrances against the "leaving book" system at Eton—so profitable for the Eton booksellers, so hard upon the parents of the Eton boys. In spite of what was stated on this subject before the Royal Commission, the abuse seems rather to increase than to diminish. We are assured that it is now an established practice that a boy on leaving should receive a leaving-book from every boy with whom he is on friendly terms in his division and in his dame's or tutor's house, as a matter of course. Mr. John Walter, late M.P. for Berks, a fast friend of Eton, denounced this leaving book imposition in very plain English before the Royal Commissioners, explaining that it has long been the habit of the Eton booksellers to buy up cheap editions of showy works that do not sell, to bind them in tawdry bindings, and then to retail them to the Eton boys as "leaving books" at their published prices, plus the binding. One of our correspondents writes: "My brother and I, who have boys at Eton, have just received our bills for leaving books for the half, one for 3*l*. odd, the other for 6*l*. odd. Accompanying them is a circular, stating that by order of the head master no goods are to be supplied without a written order from the parent or tutor, and enclosing a 'general order for school and leaving books' for our signature, worded thus, 'Messrs. —, supply my son with books and send the bill to me.' Any parent incautious enough

to sign this document is, of course, liable to regret the consequences. Surely it is the duty of the head master to crush an abuse like this at once. It can scarcely be necessary for the cultivation of school friendship that parents should be mulcted to the tune of 10*l.* or 15*l.* a year; for as the gift costs the boy who makes it no self-sacrifice, and as it is the fashion to make such gifts, the amount of literary trash thus disposed of by the Eton booksellers and paid for by the parents of the Eton boys is enormous.

### FACETIÆ.

AN Irishman, after blistering his fingers in trying to pull on a pair of boots, declared that he should never be able to get them on till he had first worn them a day or two.

THE following scene is laid in a first-class hotel: Traveller: "I desire to be called at six o'clock." Clerk (with gold chain): "If you will ring the bell at that hour one of the boys will attend to your case."

AN American has challenged the world. His ambition is to be considered the first of barbers. He will shave fifty men against any man else for one thousand dollars. His time at present is a man a minute.

It is said that chickens hatched in the natural way don't agree with those hatched by the machine. One of the former lately told a chick of the latter, in a moment of passion, that his maternal parent was an old stove.

DRY HUMOUR.—An Irish post-boy having driven a gentleman a long stage during torrents of rain, was asked if he was not very wet. "Arrah! I wouldn't care about being very wet, if I wasn't so very dry, your honour."

"WHAT makes your cows so cross?" said an old lady to the milkman, the other day. "Cross, madam? they are the gentlest things in the world." "Well, the milk is always sour," the matron replied, sharply.

COMPLIMENTARY.—A gentleman, dining at an hotel, was annoyed by a stupid waiter continually coming hovering round the table, and desired him to retire. "Excuse me, sir," said Napkin, drawing himself up, "but I'm responsible for the silver."

A DUTCHMAN was relating his marvellous escape from drowning, when thirteen of his companions were lost by the upsetting of a boat, and he alone saved. "And how did you escape their fate?" asked one of his hearers. "I did not go in the pots," was the Dutchman's placid reply.

"WHAT do you mean by a cat-and-dog life?" said a husband to his angry wife. "Look at Carlo and Kitty asleep on the rug together, I wish men lived half as peaceably with their wives." "Stop," said the lady, "lie them together and see how they will agree."

A GENTLEMAN in the spring time of life, when walking with a lady, stumbled and fell. On his resuming his perpendicular the lady remarked, "She was sorry for his unfortunate *faux pas*." "I didn't hurt my fore paws," said he, "I only barked my knee."

THE sun is called masculine, from his supporting and sustaining the moon, and finding her the where-withal to shine always as she does of a night, and from his being obliged to keep such a family of stars. The moon is called feminine because she is constantly changing, just like a ship blown about by every wind.

THE CALF RETURNED.—A dissipated young man, who ran away from home, and spent his substance in riotous living, resolved at last to return to the parental roof. His father was kind enough to forgive the young rascal for his wickedness, and rushing into the house, overcome with joy that the boy had returned, cried out to his wife, "Let us kill the prodigal; the calf has returned."

A VERY good "bull" was made from the Sheffield bench of magistrates the other day. A number of boys were brought up, charged with obstructing the footpaths and pelting passengers. The father of one of them offered some sort of defence, saying that the lads could not be always at home. "But," said the presiding magistrate, "they can't be allowed to be in the streets, annoying other people. If everything were as a stand in the street, how could people get by?"

A GOOD story is going the rounds, which is a lesson to the young who imagine success in life to be the result of mere luck. General Lefebvre, as is well known, enlisted in a regiment of the Line, and ended his career as Marshal Duke of Dantzick. An old comrade congratulated him in a sneering tone

on his high position. "Yes," said Lefebvre, "I am Duke of Dantzick (he never spelt his duchy correctly. I am a Marshal, whilst you are a clerk; but if you wish to change places with me, I will accept the bargain at cost price. Do you know how many gun-shots I have been exposed to before I won my epaulettes?—20,000. I have heard more cannon roars than there are stitches in my uniform. I will just place you in the courtyard of my hotel, and expose you to the chance of 20,000 shot and shell, at a hundred paces. If you escape, well, you shall have my sabre, plume, scarf, and orders—every one of them shall be yours." No fear of the clerk accepting the offer, as we need not remark.

### REMARKABLE DAYS.

#### January.

6. Twelfth night. General rejoicing in the Land of Cakes.
7. Great Frost: ox roasted whole on the Thames. Pope's Bull burnt by Luther.
13. Dead Letter Office established. "Rejected Addresses" appeared.
24. Invention of Pomatum by the Heads of Houses.
30. Calves' Head Club established at the Hotel de Ville.
31. Pheasant and partridge shooting ends. Legislation begins.

#### February.

13. Strype's Works edited by the Seven Head Masters.
14. St. Valentine. All Girls' Day. Lover born.
20. Potatoes introduced into England by A. Murphy.
20. Great Leap by a four-year-old on the Course of Time. Mrs. Harris born.

#### March.

14. N.W. Passage discovered by Captain Cuttle.
17. Daniel Lambert born at Broadstairs. Stout and Sizs first made.
21. Benedick. All Old Bachelors' Day. Spicing soup begins.—*Punch's Almanack*, 1868.

A STORY OF FRANCE.—I will tell you a story of a friend of mine who was visiting France the other day. There was an owl in the garden that had only one leg. My friend used to admire this owl; and two or three days after his arrival he had some "gibber," as they call their game, for dinner. "Where was the owl gone to?" he inquired of the landlord. "Monsieur had a little dish of gibber, yesterday," was the answer, to the consternation of the traveller. "Why, did you kill the owl for my dinner?" he next asked. "I no kill ze owl, m'sieur; he die himself."

### AGRICULTURAL GROWTHS.

January.—No turnips for cattle. Everything dear. No grain. Country going to ruin. Don't know where we shall be in two years' time.

February.—No beef or mutton soon. "Have to live on bacon," you say? Lucky to get it, is my answer. Why every litter of as fine pigs as you ever see all round about us have every one of 'em dropped off on account of cold. "No proper care taken!" Wasn't there? You can't provide against such storms as blow your own house about your head, and knock all your sties and out-houses, roofs and all, to the winds. "Dear me, you don't say so!" I do say so. Now then, where's your bacon? Gammon! There won't be any Spring this year. Ruin, utter ruin, unless this stops pretty quickly.

March.—Flocks, of course. Just as everything was getting to rights. Distress fearful. There won't be any grazing-land this year. No birds—nothing. Grass utterly ruined. Land soddened. We'd better all, we farmers I mean, emigrate.

April.—Things beginning to grow: good prospects. Three days' sharp frost nipped everything again. No grass for the young calves. Cows feeble. Price of labour enormous. Ruin to the farmer. Can't get any work done. Weather so uncertain, requires double the number of hands to get it over quickly. Ruin, sir. Better emigrate.

May.—Well, we had looked forward to this month. But there—Country's in a precious state. Rain, rain, rain, a deluge, sir. What we want now is fine weather, and plenty of it.

June.—"This fine weather?" It may be fine for folks in town. But they'll know what that means when winter comes on. Only wish we could get rain. That's what we want, rain. Beans shy. Oats not to be depended upon. Barley's most safe to fall. Rye promising.—*Punch's Almanack*, 1868.

MR. J. L. HATTON, it is said, was once asked what he would play on the occasion of some concert for which he was "down for a pianoforte solo." "I hardly know," said Mr. Hatton, "I am almost afraid of playing a fugue after what I was told last week. A friend, who I knew was playing at Willis's Rooms, asked a lady who had been there how she liked the pianoforte music—it was during the glee and madri-

gal concerts—when she declared that there was none performed. My friend assured her that she must be mistaken, for that I was announced; when she said that the only instrumental music she had heard was when someone came in between the parts to tune the piano; and "it happened on that particular evening," continued Mr. Hatton, "I played two of the finest of Bach's fugues."

AN American contemporary tells a singular story of feminine cruelty. A Kentucky gentleman, slightly elevated by wine, rashly undertook to kiss two young ladies at their house. Not approving of his design, they ran away, and took refuge in another room; but he had followed them so closely that, before they could close the door, he succeeded in getting one leg between the door and the jamb. There, however, they "jambed" it, and, contriving to reach a saw, deliberately cut off the leg just below the knee. The story would be altogether incredible, but that the editor adds, as an afterthought, that the leg was a wooden one.

### "DAT ISH ME!"

(A Frank Confession Made in the Interest of Trade.)

Jews are first-rate citizens, all business men, but keeners on a trade. Sharper than chain-lightning, there is nothing allowed to stand between them and a trade. They seem to take as naturally to the clothing business as a duck does to the water. Not long ago a gentleman, wishing to purchase a fine blue cloth indigo-dyed coat, called upon a Hebrew, "in whom there is no guile," and, looking over his stock, found that which appeared to suit him.

The purchaser was very particular to impress upon the seller that he wanted an indigo, not logwood-dyed cloth, the smell of the latter being offensive to him. The coat was selected and tried on, when our Hebrew friend commenced his encomium; "Now just look at dat! It vas feet you like de paper on de wall. Dat is just vat you vant?"

"Yes," said the customer, "but this is not what I want. This is a logwood-dyed coat. I don't like the smell."

"My friend," says our dealer, "dat coat is just vat you vant. But is not dat coat vat smells dat way; no, sir, dat ish me!"

It is needless to say that the gentleman did not purchase.

### COCKNEY GYMNASTICS.

One often hears it said that any man with money may get anything in London; but there is one thing, namely, exercise, that many a man in London finds it difficult to get. Men who are fond of riding get good exercise, no doubt; but it is not every man who knows well how to ride, and besides it takes him an hour or more to get clear of the paving stones, and what with bands and barrel-organs frightening one's horse, and shrieking little urchins running in the roadway, the London streets are most unpleasant places for a ride. As for Rotten Row, the riding up and down it is well nigh as monotonous as riding in a circus. Moreover, when the Row is full one dare not trot or gallop in it, and there is very little exercise to be got out of a walk. A man who drives a four-in-hand gets exercise in doing so, and is able for an hour or so to drive full care away. But then a man cannot always be driving four-in-hand, and there are many men who cannot drive a four at all, any more than they can drive a pen to write a leading article, or can drive a gig to Epsom without getting an upset.

It is as clear, then, as Thames water, that he who can suggest good ways of taking exercise in London may be regarded as a lasting benefactor to his species; and Mr. *Punch* so often has come forward in this character that he is quite prepared once more to undertake it.

Now exercise, to be of real service to the health, should in some degree combine amusement with activity, and there are many ways in London in which this may be done. For instance, there is exercise united with amusement in giving a loud double-knock at a street door, and then scampering away as fast as legs can carry you; or in knocking a policeman's hat well over his eyes and similarly trying to effect a safe escape. Capital exercise may be taken, too, by cheiving an omnibus when going at full speed, and jumping on behind to poke the conductor in the ribs, and then jumping down again to take a quiet sight at him. You know he cannot leave his post without stopping the omnibus, and, if he does so, the passengers are sure to grumble and complain and tell him not to mind you. Then again, you may get exercise by getting in a cab and driving to the City; where, directly your progress is arrested by a "block," you can jump out of your cab without your driver's knowledge, and hurry down a bye-street to avoid having to pay him.

All these are amusing ways of taking exercise, and the rightly balanced mind may be agreeably entertained by them.



It may be hinted, too, that persons of a still more active turn should start a sort of Cockney German Turner Verein to encourage competition in London street gymnastics. Prizes might be given for feats of street agility, such as trundling a child's hoop along the middle of Chesapeake, or scampering round Russell Square and running down the arena, one after another, as rapidly as possible. Climbing all the lamp-posts from St. Paul's to Hyde Park Corner might be another test for the agility of Cockneys; while playing leap-frog with old gentlemen who stoop to tie their shoes would be exercise affording considerable amusement. Another feat for Cockney gymnasts to compete in their accomplishing would be to knock over an apple-stall, and then pick all the apples up; and still more difficult than this would be the feat of scattering a trayful of hot chestnuts on the pavement, and competing with the small boys who would quickly make a grab at them.

Jumping over the potato-cans would vary the monotony of walking in the streets, and considerably increase the exercise of doing so; and it is needless to point out that the flourishing of a walking-stick or the brandishing of an umbrella may very fairly exercise the muscles of one's arms, and amuse one by the fun of nearly poking people's eyes out.

Perhaps though the best way of taking exercise in London would be to turn head-over-heels like the little brats who caper for loose coppers flung from bus-roofs. A prize might annually be given by the Turner Verein to the Londoner who turned the greatest number of these "wheels," as they are popularly termed; and if an alderman or two, or any other men of substance, were persuaded to compete, this feat of street gymnastics would yield plenty of amusement.—*Punch's Pocket-Book*, 1868.

**CUTTING.**—What is the most unsatisfactory harvest known?—A "county crop."—*Fun*.

If men believe they are superior to beasts, it is astonishing what trouble they take to prove the contrary.—*Tonahawk*.

**NOT EXACTLY A RIDDLE.**—What is the sensation that an educated person derives from a sensational novel?—A sensation of nausea.—*Punch*.

A YOUNG wit told Diogenes that it was woman's mission to make fools of men. "How vexed they must be," replied the philosopher, "to find how often Nature has forestalled them."—*Tonahawk*.

**NOT TOO COMMON.**—Shy Eleanor has such a horror of being thought forward that she is taking the greatest pains to alter the character of her writing, having been told that hers is "a bold hand."—*Punch*.

**CUTTING THE CARDS.**—A rich but irascible old gentleman of our acquaintance, who is passionately devoted to Mrs. Battle's favourite game, has out off his son with a whistle-marker for putting "no cards" after the announcement of his marriage.—*Fun*.

#### FROM THE MIDLAND COUNTIES.

*Scene—The Coffee Room.*

**Mild Old Gentleman:** "Waiter, why is the poker chained to the fireplace in this way?"

**Calm Waiter:** "Oh, only to prevent our customers from using it when they get into hargymment." [Old Party orders a private room.]

—*Fun*.

**ROMEO PAST AND PRESENT.**—A very old gentleman the other day, during Miss Vestval's performances, remarked, at the Megatherium: "When I was a boy there was a Romeo Coates, and now, sir, now I understand there is a Petticoats Romeo."—*Punch*.

We were considerably amused the other evening at three little girls playing among the brush in the garden. Two of them were "making believe keep house" a few yards distant from each other—neighbours, as it were. One of them says to the third little girl, "There, now, Nelly, you go to Sarah's house, and stop a little while and talk, and then you come back and tell me all what she says about me; then I'll talk about her; then you go and tell her all what I say, and then we'll play get mad and don't speak to each other, just like our mothers do, you know. Oh, that'll be such fun."

**THE ODDITIES OF OWNERSHIP.**—Why do people call their residences by so strange names? Why style a brick cottage "Stonehenge?" or a little tenement in a shady street "Sunny Side?" Why are bold-looking edifices styled "Retreats," and places without a tree "The Elms," "The Oaks," or "The Willows?" If Jones or Robinson, with the aid of a building society, erect a weather-board dwelling, why christen it "The Rosary," "The Bower," or "Manners-Sutton Villa?" Doubtless, a lady who takes in boarders may with propriety call her residence "The Lodge" out of compliment to her lodgers, but it is decidedly objectionable even

for an Englishman to designate his abode a "castle," although the habitation of a Briton may be looked upon as such.

**THE WHALE.**—The common whale is 100 tons, or 220,000 lb., is equal to 88 elephants, or 440 bears. The whalebone in such a whale may be taken at 8,360 lbs., and the blubber at 140 to 170 tons. The remains of the Fossil whale (*Balena prisca*) which have been found on the coast of Ystad, in the Baltic, and even far inland in Wangapause, Westergothland, betoken a whale which, although not more than between 50 and 60 feet long, must at least have had a body 27 times larger and heavier than the common whale.

**DIPLOMATIC TELEGRAPHY.**—It is no wonder that people who send private telegrams abroad complain that they very often arrive after the ordinary post. Since the 5th instant, no less than 390 dispatches in cypher have been brought either by the French Government or foreign ministers to the central office in the Rue Grenelle St. Germain. The transmission of a dispatch in cypher takes thrice the time of an ordinary one; and as diplomatic dispatches have precedence of others, the general public is necessarily kept off the wires for long periods.

#### DESOLATE.

To be alone amidst the city's busy throng  
Of eager faces passing to and fro;  
To watch the traffic, ever going along,  
With not a soul to speak to that we know;  
Ah! this is loneliness, this when we feel alone,  
To be amidst a crowd, and yet to all unknown.

This for a time will be thy weary lot,  
Afar from all who know and love thee well;  
In vain thou wouldst the past should be  
forgot,  
And hopeless love within thy bosom quell;  
But oh! such loneliness doth only foster love,  
With none to stay the thoughts that ever backward rove.

Better by far, beside the restless sea,  
When angry waves tear up the helpless sand,  
When none are there, except thy God and thee;  
Far better thus, with all thy griefs to stand;  
This may be loneliness, but not so lone  
As being amidst a crowd, and yet to all unknown.

Better amidst the ocean's ceaseless roar  
Thy prayer to send to Him who knows thee best,  
Who stills the tempest on the sea and shore,  
The tumult of the heart, and gives thee rest.  
With Him it is not loneliness to be alone,  
Unknown to others, all to Him are known.

M. A. B.

#### GEMS.

**MEN** may loiter, but time flies on the wings of the wind, and all the great interests of life are speeding on with the sure and silent tread of destiny.

**ENVY.**—Let it be constantly remembered that he who envies another confesses his superiority, and let those be reformed by their pride who have lost their virtue.

**NATURAL EXPRESSIONS.**—In the cultivation of the feelings the natural language is of the greatest importance. Have the feeling which you wish to inspire speak its natural language, and you will impress the juvenile minds. Avoid particularly the natural expressions of the inferior affections, as of anger, jealousy, envy, impatience, &c. In showing anger to children you give a practical lesson. Follow the example of the philosopher, who said, "I should punish you if I were not angry."

**HORTICULTURE IN EGYPT.**—It may be worth recording, as an instance of the influence which horticulture as carried out in England exercises on foreign potentates who witness it, that the Viceroy of Egypt, when recently here, was so struck with the plants and flowers he saw that he has commissioned Mr. William Bull, of Chelsea, to send him out a thoroughly proficient flower-gardener, one capable of carrying out floriculture in a similar manner to the style adopted in this country, and especially with a view to reproducing in the Palace Garden, Cairo, effective arrangements of flower-beds, to which art so much attention is now paid in our public parks and pleasure-grounds.

**WALKING ON WATER.**—At Holyhead nearly the entire population turned out the other day to witness a gentleman walking on the water in the harbour in shoes like snow-shoes. He did not at any time sink below the knees, and went along at his ease, smoking

a pipe. Between forty and fifty years ago a person traversed the harbour of Leith in a somewhat similar way, only in that case the "shoes" were air-tight tins, three of which were affixed to the three feet of a tripod, on which the water-traverser rode. He had paddles attached to his feet, by which he rapidly propelled himself.

#### HOUSEHOLD TREASURES.

**CLEANING ERMINE SKINS.**—Rub the fur well with a piece of soft flannel, always against the grain; then rub the fur with common flour until clean, shake it well, and then rub again with the flannel till the flour is all out.

**DRESSING SKINS.**—As soon as the skin is taken from the animal it is thoroughly stretched, and fastened to the ground by means of pegs, and there left until dry, when, without removing it, it is rubbed with a brickbat (of a soft nature), until it becomes quite soft and supple, completely losing its raw appearance, and assuming that of a roughish leather. This at the Cape is called "braying," evidently taken from the verb to "bray," signifying to pound, or grind small.

**INCOMBUSTIBLE WOOD.**—According to M. Schatteman's experiments, there is an easy and cheap way of rendering wood incombustible; it consists in coating it with chloride of lime. It is true this will only protect the surface, but it will prevent the flames from spreading. Chloride of lime, or more properly chloride of calcium, is obtained on a large scale by decomposing bones with hydrochloric acid, which dissolves the calcareous part without attacking the gelatine they contain. This neutral and liquid chloride marks 14 deg. by Baume's areometer, and contains 15 per cent. of anhydrous chloride. To this liquid an equal weight of slaked lime should be added, and it may then be applied to the woodwork to be preserved. The operation should be repeated twice with a common whitewashing brush. The cost is at the rate of about 5 frs. per 100 square metres, the liquid costing 1 fr. and the rest being the man's wages. Where chloride of lime cannot be had it may be made by treating chalk with hydrochloric acid. To test the incombustibility of wood prepared in this way, take a few bricks and enclose a square with them; fill up the space with a kilogramme of straw, place three wooden laths across, coated as above, then put another row of bricks upon the first, and place three uncoated laths across. Having well secured them, set fire to the straw, when the upper or uncoated laths will catch fire and be completely consumed in five or six minutes, while the lower ones, protected by their coating, will only glimmer and be carbonized where the flames touch them; but will everywhere else be safe from combustion. Fir should be selected for the experiment.

#### MISCELLANEOUS.

THE loss to places of amusement in London from the cab strike was estimated at 5,000*l*.

THE Queen gained the second prize for fat pigs at the Birmingham cattle show. Her Majesty also took the third prize for Hereford heifers.

THE King of Siam has conferred upon Sir John Bowring the title of "Phraya Siamitree Maha Yesa," for services rendered to the Siamese. This is the highest dignity that can be borne by a foreigner.

THERE was in Covent Garden Market a basket of twelve pears, for which the enormous price of fifteen guineas was asked. This is at the rate of 26*s*. 3*d*. per pear.

THE Bank of England employs only two officers on private police service; while the Post-office requires six, at an expense of 540*l*. per annum. The Times office, and the Union, and London and Westminster Banks also employ one; and the Probate Court three.

It is a curious coincidence that the first Princess who took Christianity to Russia bore the name of Olga. The first Queen of the Greek faith, who now sits on the Greek throne for the first time is also an Olga. The Greeks take great notice of this in several of their local papers.

**MONUMENT TO LORD PALMERSTON.**—The monument to Lord Palmerston, voted by the House of Commons for Westminster Abbey, has been given by the Commissioner of Works to Mr. Jackson, an artist not hitherto generally known in monumental sculpture. The other statue of the illustrious statesman, which is designed for the embellishment of New Palace Yard, is in progress in the studio of Mr. Woolner, whose successful bust of Mr. Cobden is generally known.

## CONTENTS.

	Page		Page
THE GOLDEN HOPE	289	DESOLATE	311
OLD LAMBETH CHURCH	290	CHMS	311
CLOCK	292	HORNHOLD TREASURES	311
THE SILK WORM	292	HORTICULTURE IN EGYPT	311
THE AGES OF NATIONS	292	WALKING ON WATER	311
WHO WAS IT?	292	MONUMENT TO LORD PALMERSTON	311
SWEET ROSES YANGLER	296	MISCELLANEOUS	311
THE DEATHS IN AUSTRIA	297		
THE SILENT PARTNER	297		
THE FIRST SMILE: A CHRISTMAS STORY	301		
SCIENCE	303		
CONCRETE BUILDINGS	303		
NEW THAMES TUNNEL	303		
REAL TROUBLES	304		
ELANOR	305		
THE DUCHESS VISCOUNT	307		
MRS. BLOOMER	309		
"LEAVING BOOKS"	309		
FACETIE	310		
THE WHALE	311		
DIPLOMATIC TELEGRAPHY	311		

## NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

**LEUCER.**—John George Edgar, the biographer and novelist, was born in 1834, and died in 1864.

**JOHN J.**—An advertising quack, without doubt, and therefore to be avoided as you would a pestilence.

**G. COSTER.**—The Act would meet the case to which you refer.

**E. M. MARSH.**—We have repeatedly answered the question. Higglote, or Piccadilly, will be a sufficient address.

**A SUBSCRIBER FROM THE BEGINNING.**—1. Any paper will do, but write on one side only. 2. We cannot judge of a MS. without perusing the whole. 3. See our notice at the bottom of the last column of our correspondence page.

**G. GROVER.**—Lamp black and lard well mixed will answer your purpose; it should be well rubbed in before the fire, and afterwards varnished with thin liquid gum arabic, applied with a brush.

**CAPTAIN FRITTE.**—The lottery is, we have reason to know, genuine as far as it goes; but to expect to obtain a house for a shilling would be very silly indeed. The chances will be some thousands to one against you.

**M. G. 1.** The story you mention will be concluded this year (1868). 1. The Lennox motto is *En la rose je fleurie* (I flourish among roses). 2. Handwriting good and lady-like.

**A CONSTANT READER** is desirous to know how he can stop his growth. The question is very foolish, and we can only answer it by recommending total abstinence from eating and drinking.

**ELLIS.**—*Appui* is a term applied to any particular point or body upon which troops are formed, or by which they are marched in line or column. This is generally called the point d'appui.

**FAMINT.**—Donjon means the principal tower of a castle, usually raised on a natural or artificial mound and situated in the innermost court. The lower part is commonly used as a prison. It is sometimes called the Donjon-keep, or tower.

**RALPH.**—If decay has once set in, it is not easy to stop it; however, procure 1 oz. of finely powdered myrrh, 2 spoonfuls of the best white honey, and a little green sea powdered very small; mix them well together, and wet the teeth and gums with a little every night and morning.

**A CONSTANT READER.**—Apply at the India Office (military department), Westminster. The information will be supplied gratis. You will, however, have small chance of obtaining it if you do not know the number of the man's regiment.

**ADOLPHE.**—The word Mussulman means a Mohammedan, or follower of Mahomet; it is derived from *Muslin*, of which it is the dual number, meaning "resigned to God." The appellation is generally said to have been first applied to the Saracens.

**LEA GROSS, A CONSTANT READER.**—We certainly cannot inform you of the names of the persons who have inhabited the castle you name since the days of Queen Elizabeth. The editor of the local newspaper might, however, give you the information, providing the place be of historic origin.

**W. R. 1.** We have no knowledge of the company you name. 2. If you cannot afford to patent or register your invention you will not get a man of means to share the expenses and profit with you? Be cautious, however, as to whom you make the proposal. There are always respectable persons willing to carry out inventions of merit.

**R. G.**—The Casquets are a group of rocks in the English Channel, seven miles from Alderney; they have often been fatal to vessels, and in 1119 Prince William (son of Henry I.) and his suite perished there. In 1744 the Victory, ship of war, 110 guns, also was shipwrecked upon them; on the highest there is a lighthouse.

**JOHN.**—Cossus was a deity worshipped in Rome, who presided over councils; his temple in the Maximus Circus was covered, to show that councils ought to be secret and inviolable. Romulus instituted festivals to his honour, called Consualia, during the celebration of which the Romans carried away the Sabine women.

**A SUBSCRIBER.**—The system of advertising for children for adoption has recently been exposed in the leading newspapers as of a most scandalous character. If, however, you are honest and sincere in your wish (which, as you require a sum of money with the child, is open to doubt), you can advertise in the daily newspapers.

**T. W. GUTHRIE.**—1. For broken lips take 2 oz. of oil of almonds, 1 drachm each of white wax and spermaceti; melt and while warm add 2 oz. of rosewater, and 2 oz. of orange flower water; this will make an excellent salve, rub in occasionally. 2. For chilblains, rub them frequently

with a little turpentine or warm vinegar. If broken apply a little cooling ointment, which may be procured from any chemist. 3. A good purifier of the blood may be made as follows: 2 oz. of sarsaparilla, sliced and bruised, 1 oz. of shavings of guaiacum; boil over a slow fire in three quarts of water, adding towards the end 2 oz. of sassafras wood, and 3 drachms of liquorice, strain well; a pint and a half to two quarts of this decoction may be taken through the day. 4. Handwriting has too many flourishes, otherwise with a little more practice it would be good enough for the office you mention.

**MARTIN.**—The ages of the clerks in the solicitor's office of the Post-Office vary from 18 to 30. The examination consists of writing from dictation, arithmetic (including vulgar and decimal fractions), English composition, general principles of equity and common law, and conveyancing. The salary of the Postmaster-General is 2,500*l*.

**JANE.**—Pomatum is sometimes made with water and wax, although these two substances do not unite, unless the following plan be adopted: Put into a glazed earthen pot 6 oz. of river water and 2 oz. of white wax, to which add a rather large quantity of salts of tartar. The vessel should then be placed upon a large fire; when cold it will be found to be a very superior pomatum.

**AGNITA.**—God and love are everywhere—in the light, in colours, in flowers, in the beauty of man, in the happiness of animals, in the human mind, in the endless spheres. As the sun shines on all, alike yet differently, it is majestic on the ocean, sparkling in a dewdrop, ruddy on the ripe fruit, silver on the stream, many-coloured in the rainbow, and pale and tremulous in the moon.

**A CONSTANT READER.**—To add signatures to a will, as witnesses, after the death of the testator would be fraudulent, and hence the will would be of no avail. Remember, however, that this is a very serious charge, so be careful how you make it. If you have reason to believe that which you assert be true, take no steps without consulting a solicitor.

## LITTLE BUD.

I feel thy presence, though so still,  
Sweet little bud of love;  
Pera as a scented snow-flake  
From regions far above.

I feel thy presence like a ray  
Of sunshine in the dark,  
Illumining my chamber wall  
Like starlight's tiny spark.

I feel thy presence like a prayer  
Whose benedictions flow  
From out the inner heart of hearts,  
Beyond the seal of woe.

I feel thy presence, little bud,  
Thy voice, so silent here,  
Upon the gaze with eyes of love,  
Salute thy lips so dear.

F. W.

**J. H. VERY ANXIOUS.**—Have nothing to do with the man you name. He is without doubt a quack, whose advertisements are so many traps to catch the unwary and imprudent. Why not apply at once to a respectable medical practitioner. If you cannot afford so to do, go to an hospital surgeon. If you do not accept this advice and set upon it, you will be but tampering with your constitution.

**J. J.**—Better rest content with Dame Nature. We do not like to advise the use of depilatories, as most of them are injurious. The only one we can recommend is the following: 21 oz. of resin, and 1 oz. of bees-wax, melted and mixed well together, then formed into sticks for use. Handwriting would not be bad, with a little more attention paid to the formation of the letters.

**S. HARRISON.**—The qualifications for a cadet in the Royal Marines are: age, fifteen to nineteen; an acquaintance with arithmetic, algebra, Euclid's Elements, 1, 2, 3, 4, and portions of Books 6 and 11; proof of rules in trigonometry, and the construction of logarithmic tables, application of trigonometry to the determination of heights, distances, &c. As every individual rises according to seniority no commissions can be purchased in the Royal Marines.

**KATE C. Y.**—If he has married a man of whom or his connexions you know nothing after a three months' courtship, was the height of imprudence, and for which we fear you will have to pay the penalty. Under the circumstances we can offer you no advice but to bear your trouble patiently, taking, at the same time, every means to discover whether he has another wife or not—nor forgetting at the same time that your suspicions may be groundless.

**HOGARTH.**—Sir Robert Peel's collection of pictures is in Whitehall Gardens. The late Sir Robert Peel formed a fine collection; the gallery contains several works of the Flemish and Dutch schools, including examples of Van Dyck, Van Ostade, Ruysdael, Rembrandt, Vander Velde, Hobbins, Metz, Snyder, Teniers, Jan Steen, and Berghem. There is also a good selection of English pictures, including several portraits by Sir Joshua Reynolds.

**MARTHA.**—The Musk Ovary is a species of *Capromys*, animals belonging to the class *Mammalia*; it is about the size of a rabbit or hare, and is exclusively herbivorous. The Musk Ovary is so called from its feet emitting a strong perfume of musk. It burrows under the ground like the mole, and can be thus traced merely by its scent. It is a native of the West India Islands, in some of which it is called by the natives Manacou.

**MENUTTE.**—Queen's Messengers are certain officers employed under the Secretaries of State, who are kept in readiness to carry dispatches either at home or abroad; they were formerly employed for serving the secretaries warrants for the apprehension of persons accused of high treason, and in such cases it was not at all uncommon for them to detain their prisoners at their own houses; in the year 1713 the Ambassador of Morocco was taken into custody by a King's Messenger.

**L. C.**—"The Wandering Jew" is a fictitious personage, celebrated in popular tradition. The legend is as follows: While our Saviour toiled along, burthened by the weight of His cross, He wished to rest before the house of a Jew named Abasurus, who brutally drove Him from his door; whereupon our Lord is said to have replied, "Then shalt wander over the earth even till I return." The Jew is supposed to have immediately commenced an eternal journey,

which has never been lightened from that period to the present by a moment's repose. This legend has been made by many writers the foundation of an ingenious fiction. It may truly be taken as the symbol of the Hebrew people, compelled during so many centuries to wander far from their ancient home and kingdom.

**M. G.**—The Cow-tree is a native of Venezuela, in South America; it is often found growing on the poorest and most rocky soil; its leaves are dry and leathery in appearance, and for several months of the year not a shower of rain falls to moisten its roots and branches; yet by piercing the bark it yields a liquid resembling milk, which is sweet and nourishing. At sunrise this fluid seems to be especially abundant, and at this hour the natives go to the trees in great numbers to get their daily supply.

**SELINA.**—A child always feels keenly when his toy is withheld. What an outburst of grief escapes him, you would think his heart would break; but let it be restored then his tears are suddenly checked, and before they are dried upon his face the room resounds with his gleeful laughter; but every such expression of sorrow or of joy has its influence, and throws a shadow or a light across his future years; every first thing continues for ever with the child; the first colour, the first music, the first flower, the first girl, the first fright, the first joy, paint the foreground of his life.

**ALFRED.**—A cement for damp walls may be made by boiling 2 quarts of tar with 2 oz. of grease in an iron pot for a quarter of an hour; add some of it to a mixture of slacked lime and powdered glass, which must be passed through a hair sieve and completely dried in an iron pot over a fire. In the proportion of two parts lime and one glass, still be some of the consistence of thin plaster; it must be used as soon as made, or it will be too hard. If the wall be very damp two coatings will be necessary; a plaster must then be laid over the cement.

**LAW.**—1. Judging from your statement of your past employment, and your handwriting, assuredly yes. 2. From 12s. to 2*l*. per week, depending upon ability, experience, and character. 3. To get into a parliamentary solicitor's office your only course is to apply to a parliamentary solicitor, securing testimonials. 4. Advertise in the daily newspapers. 5. There are many persons who obtain situations for clerks in London. Be careful, however, to whom you apply, for their name is legion, and in all "legions" you must expect to find many individual black sheep. The fee is about 5*s*.

**ROCK AND BURKE.**—The Opera House was destroyed by fire June 17, 1789; the Pantheon, June 14, 1792; Asley's Amphitheatre, September 17, 1794; Asley's (2nd time), September 1, 1808; Surrey Theatre, August 12, 1809; Covent Garden Theatre, September 20, 1809; Drury Lane Theatre, February 24, 1809; Royalty Theatre, April 11, 1826; English Opera House, February 16, 1820; Asley's Amphitheatre (3rd time), June 8, 1841; Olympic Theatre, March 29, 1849; Pavilion Theatre, February 13, 1856; Covent Garden Theatre (2nd time), March 5, 1856; Surrey Theatre, January 20, 1854; Her Majesty's Theatre, December 6, 1867.

**F. H.**—The history of the growth of wool is indeed very curious; six years ago no ground of fine wool was raised in Great Britain, in the United States, or in any country except Spain; in the latter country the flocks were owned entirely by the nobility or by the Crown; in 1794 a small flock was sent to the Elector of Saxony as a present from the King of Spain, whence the entire product of Saxony wool, now of such immense value, is derived; in 1809, during the invasion of Spain by the French, some of the valuable Crown flocks were sold to raise money. A portion of the pure, uninfused Merino blood of these flocks is to be found in Vermont at this time.

**EARTHICE.**—Twenty-seven, tall, fair, good looking, affectionate, domesticated, and competent to assist in any light business.

**F. W. C.**—Nineteen, tall, and good looking, in a respectable situation with a good salary. Respondent must be about the same age, handsome, amiable, and of a respectable family.

**ARTHUR.**—Twenty-one, tall, good looking, dark eyes, good tempered, with small income. Respondent must be a Protestant, pretty, not more than twenty, and have a little money.

**ROSS AND LILY.**—"Ross," light hair, hazel eyes, and fair complexion. "Lily," dark hair, blue eyes, rosy complexion, thoroughly domesticated. Respondents must be respectable tradesmen, carpenters preferred.

**LIVELY NELLY.**—Twenty-two, 5 ft. 3 in., clear complexion, dark eyes, brown hair, good tempered, and thoroughly domesticated, but no fortune. Respondent must be tall and fair, about twenty-eight or thirty, a tradesman or a seafaring man preferred.

**BESSY, MINNIE, and LIZZY.**—"Bessy," 5 ft. 3 in., black hair, blue eyes. Respondent must be tall and dark. "Minnie," 5 ft. 6 in., light brown hair, blue eyes, and very domesticated. Respondent must be tall and dark, and dandy. "Lizzy," 4 ft. 11 in., dark brown hair and eyes, and good looking. Respondent must be fair.

## COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED:

**ROSEKAMOR** is responded to by—"Pass," nineteen, 5 ft. 2 in., brown hair and eyes, very amiable, and an excellent cook. ELIZA by—"J. Jenks," 50*l*. a year, independent of trade, a good mechanic, of industrious, temperate habits.

PART LVI. FOR JANUARY, IS NOW READY. PRICE 6*d*.

\*. \* Now Ready, VOL. IX. OF THE LONDON READER. Price 4*s*. 6*d*.

Also, the TITLE and INDEX to VOL. IX. Price ONE PENNY.

N.B.—CORRESPONDENTS MUST ADDRESS THEIR LETTERS TO THE EDITOR OF "THE LONDON READER," 314, Strand, W.C.

†† We cannot undertake to return Rejected Manuscripts. As they are sent to us voluntarily, authors should retain copies.

London: Printed and Published for the Proprietor, at 334, Strand, by J. WATSON.



ADVERTISEMENTS.



*This Tea is imported with the leaf not coloured, is highly recommended by medical and scientific men, and combines purity with fine flavour and lasting strength.*  
*Sold by Chemists, Stationers, and Confectioners, in all parts of the Kingdom.*

**Holloway's Ointment and Pills.**

**BEWARE OF CHANGES.**

**F**EW persons can withstand the many changes from dry to wet, and from cold to entry, which characterize our present summers. Sore throats, influenza, bronchitis, diarrhoea, and excessive debility, are only a few of the complaints now prevailing, which may be set aside by rubbing Holloway's Ointment twice a day over the throat, chest, or abdomen, or as near to the seat of mischief as possible, and taking his Pills inwardly, not with the view of purging, but of purifying and regulating. This well-known and easy mode of treatment will, shortly after its first employment, check all unfavourable symptoms, secure obduracy and comfort, and rescue the invalid from danger.

**RUPTURES.—By Royal Letters Patent.**  
**WHITE'S MOC-MAIN LEVER TRUSS.**



Is allowed by upwards of 500 Medical Gentlemen to be the most effective invention in the curative treatment of HERNIA. The use of a steel spring, so often hurtful in its effects, is here avoided; a soft bandage being worn round the body, while the requisite resisting power is supplied by the MOC-MAIN PAD and PATENT LEVER, fitting with so much ease and closeness that it cannot be detected, and may be worn during sleep. A descriptive circular may be had, and the Truss (which cannot fail to fit) forwarded by post, on the circumference of the body two inches below the hips being sent to the

Manufacturer, Mr. WHITE, 228, Piccadilly, London.

Price of a Single Truss, 16s., 21s., 26s. 6d., and 31s. 6d. Postage, 1s.

„ of a Double Truss, 31s. 6d., 42s., and 52s. 6d. Postage, 1s. 8d.

„ Umbilical Truss, 42s. and 52s. 6d. Postage, 1s. 10d.

Post Office Orders to be made payable to JOHN WHITE, Post Office, Piccadilly.

**New Patent Elastic Stockings, Knee-Caps, &c.**

The Material of which these are made is recommended by the faculty as being peculiarly ELASTIC and COMPRESSIBLE, and the best invention for giving efficient and permanent support in all cases of Weakness, Varicose Veins, &c. Price, 4s. 6d., 7s. 6d., 10s., to 16s. each. Postage 6d.

JOHN WHITE, Manufacturer, 228, Piccadilly, London.

**WILLING & CO.,**

THE

**LARGEST ADVERTISING CONTRACTORS IN THE WORLD**

366, Gray's Inn Road, W.C.,

**70, ST. MARTIN'S LANE, W.C., LONDON,**

AND

**25, RUE DE LA MICHODIÈRE, PARIS.**

**CONTRACTORS**

**FOR ADVERTISEMENTS ON THE 3,500 RAILWAY STATIONS**

In the United Kingdom, and on

**PUBLIC STREET STATIONS, OMNIBUSES, RAILWAY CARRIAGES, RAILWAY TICKETS,**

AND PUBLICATIONS. ALSO ON THE

**2,000 RAILWAY STATIONS IN FRANCE,**

AND FOR EVERY DESCRIPTION OF ADVERTISEMENT IN PARIS.

**PATENTEES IN ENGLAND AND FRANCE OF THE CARD DISTRIBUTOR.**

**SOLE AGENTS FOR THE**

**Indestructible Enamelled Iron Tablets, for Signs, Placards,**

**ORNAMENTAL ARCHITECTURAL, & ECCLESIASTICAL WORK, &c.**

**WILLING & CO.,**  
**ADVERTISING CONTRACTORS,**  
**LONDON AND PARIS,**

**EXCLUSIVE AGENTS FOR THE "DAILY TELEGRAPH,"**

AGENTS ALSO FOR THE

**"TIMES," "STANDARD," "STAR" "LLOYD'S NEWS,"**

&c., &c., AT THEIR OFFICES,

**70, St. Martin's Lane, 366, Gray's Inn Road, London,**

AND

**25, RUE DE LA MICHODIERE, PARIS,**

SOLE AGENTS IN ENGLAND

**FOR ADVERTISEMENTS IN ALL FRENCH NEWSPAPERS.**

---

**WILLING & CO.,**  
**ADVERTISING CONTRACTORS,**

**70, St. Martin's Lane, 366, Gray's Inn Road, London,**

AND

**25, RUE DE LA MICHODIERE, PARIS,**

SOLE AGENTS FOR

**Indestructible Enamelled Iron Tablets, for Signs, Placards,**  
&c.  
**ORNAMENTAL ARCHITECTURAL, and ECCLESIASTICAL WORK.**



THE  
**LONDON READER**

Literature, Science, Art, and General Information.

PART *58*

PRICE SIX PENCE.

LONDON:

PUBLISHED BY J. WATSON, 334, STRAND,

AND SOLD BY ALL RESPECTABLE BOOKSELLERS.

# METROPOLITAN RAILWAY.

## NOTICE.

**WILLING & CO.,**  
**CONTRACTORS FOR THE BOOKSTALLS,**  
**ADVERTISEMENTS ON THE RAILWAY STATIONS,**

IN THE

1st, 2nd, and 3rd Class Carriages, and on the Back of the Passengers' Tickets,  
(100,000 per Day), and on all Railways in England and France.

SOLE AGENTS IN ENGLAND

**FOR ADVERTISEMENTS ON ALL FRENCH RAILWAYS.**

---

**WILLING & CO.,**

**ADVERTISING CONTRACTORS,**

**70, St. Martin's Lane, 366, Gray's Inn Road, London,**

AND

**25, RUE DE LA MICHODIERE, PARIS,**

SOLE AGENTS FOR

**Indestructible Enamelled Iron Tablets, for Signs, Placards,**

**ORNAMENTAL ARCHITECTURAL, & ECCLESIASTICAL WORK, &c.**